BLACK GENESIS

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BLACK GENESIS

A Chronicle

BY SAMUEL GAILLARD STONEY
AND GERTRUDE MATHEWS SHELBY

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MARTHA BENSLEY BRUÉRE

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TO
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FOREWORD

In dealing with the negro there is no task more exacting than to sense and transmit the subtle nuances and unique racial philosophy of their folk legends. It calls into play unique literary talents, for this is the lore of an alien race and the medium of preservation is dialect. Writers who undertake such a task must be more than letter perfect in the vernacular. That Samuel Gaillard Stoney and Gertrude Mathews Shelby have undertaken the work of bringing together tales of the Gullah negroes of the Carolina Low Country is a subject for congratulation. To the background of a plantation boyhood and a familiarity with such stories that antedates his conscious memory Mr. Stoney adds a knowledge of the dialect so perfect that he thinks in it, and so authoritative that he was recently selected by Columbia University to contribute a phonograph record of Gullah for their permanent collection of American dialects. Mrs. Shelby's antecedents were plantation owners, and she has besides studied at first hand the negroes of the Antilles and the Djoekas, or Bush negroes of Dutch Guiana, and knows much of their customs and lore. There can be no doubt that these stories of the South Carolina coast negroes will take their place beside the Georgia legends of Joel Chandler Harris, for they possess to an extraordinary degree the inimitable and imaginative character of the race.

Du Bose Heyward.

THE FAMILY TREE

of

Gullah Folk Speech

and

Folk Tales.

To trace the family tree of Gullah, the language of these stories, is a moving human adventure. Most pronounced of the Negro-English jargons in America, it is the living symbol of struggles of early settlers before, as well as after, they came to this continent. Broadly, Gullah is the strongest linguistic connection between America and the Antilles and Africa; it links two hemispheres and two eras. Specifically, it stands as a curious survival of the Low Country of South Carolina in the high days of its great plantations, when Rice, and Indigo and Cotton made this one of the preeminent regions of the South. In particular, it is an English dialect of the 17th and 18th centuries which has been preserved on those coastal plantations in an almost pristine impurity. Some few words of African origin are at once in use today in Carolina, in the West Indies, and in the older English possessions of the tropical West Coast of Africa. Comparison, not only of these verbal remnants of history, but of negro folklore and tradition in the three areas, links them in an intra-continental way that delights the heart and, paradoxically, excites the sympathy, of those interested in the migrations of men.

The branches of the family tree of Gullah are Ameri-

can, the trunk is West Indian and the roots English and African. Its origins are in England's great colonial expansion of the seventeenth century. The Antilles were aflame with prosperity and demanding labor, any kind of labor that could help with a hoe to turn tropic soil and sunshine into golden guineas. The little Island of Barbados was adding each year more than a thousand to her permanent population. In peace times men were coming there from all the counties of Great Britain and Ireland, some on their own account, some under honest indenture, but others boot-legged into virtual slavery. With the excuse of any of the great political rebellions of those times, the business rivalled the African slave trade in methods if not in numbers. Prisoners were shipped wholesale. Cromwell sent out boat loads of recalcitrant Irishmen. James II gave to his loyal followers strings of West-Country men, caught after Monmouth's rebellion, whose necks had been saved from Jeffries and Kirk that the prices of their bodies, in the plantations, might fill the purses of Privy Councillors or Maids of Honor. Each Stuart uprising sent its quota of Scotchmen into West Indian bondage, until those narrow islands held a mixture of dialects from which a new common denominator of the English tongue had to be found.

But this was only half of the problem, the rest was negro. Their contribution to Gullah traces back to the barracoons along the African coast. To these slave pens were brought men, women, and children, of all sorts, tribes, and conditions. Caught in the dragnet of the trade, some kidnapped, some prisoners of war, some sold as tribal punishment, some simply swapped by

their families for gewgaws or gunpowder, they were assembled there in tragic black companies to await the slave ships.

Most of these negroes spoke some variant of the great Bantu language that covers more than half of Africa, but Bantu in its gradual spread has broken up into hundreds of dialects and, as any one who has seen Sir Harry Johnston's work on them can understand, they differ so that many of the negroes in the barracoons understood each other with difficulty, if they understood each other at all. This accidental confusion was fomented by the captains of the early slave ships. After the policy of Babel, they mixed tongues and peoples so that lack of common speech might cripple concerted action. Too many men from the same tribe in a cargo led at least to nostalgia, at worst to rebellion.

The new negroes, the Salt Waters of Barbadian parlance, were mixed afresh in the slave markets and in the plantation quarters. Once there they were taught English as soon as possible. White "redemptioners," their fellow laborers, or overseers, drilled into them enough language to understand orders. English it was, but English reduced to the cracking-point, a lingo full of rigamarole and repetition, necessitated by limited forms and vocabulary. Encisted in it are characteristic words and usages, from many of the ancient peasant dialects of the British Isles, legacies of the first teachers of the jargon. In it neither European nor African took much account of grammar or syntax. The countryman was probably impatient of the trammels that rules imposed; the negro was receiving, not giving, a speech. His contribution was phonetic, eliminating or adapting sounds

that were hard to an African tongue, and taking short cuts with onerous forms. Once the simple needs of a plantation-laborer were relatively satisfied, the arduous instruction was abandoned by mutual consent; the negroes had been brought out to cultivate sugar-cane, not flowers of the English tongue.

If the first generation of planters found it much simpler to adopt this new dialect than to attempt further education of the blacks, the second generation, cared for by negro servants, and playing with negro children, learned it more readily than the English of their parents. Even after they had been drilled to careful speech, it was second nature to slip back into the old familiar idiom in speaking to a plantation hand. By the time this second generation of planters had grown up in Barbados (and the same is generally true of the whole region) the islands were settled. The search for land for wealthy men's sons took the young men to all the other colonies. Many came to Carolina because it was so easy of access that plantation establishments could be moved over wholesale from the parent islands.

Solid bodies of West Indian life were grafted on the new mainland province, with customs, traditions and dialect intact. Rice, Indigo, and later Cotton were found to thrive on the Carolina Coast. Rice was the first crop in every way, historically, economically and socially. The plantations on which it grew sometimes persisted from the day that they were planted out with a gang of Barbadian negroes, to the end of the old era in 1865, with the same name in the "big house" and the same families in the "negro street."

Speech changed here less than anything else. Save

for the Huguenots, no outside influence of importance came to bear upon the dialect, and their contribution to it is problematical. If the old West Indian dialect changed in becoming Gullah, it was only to richen with age, to become more unctuous of accent and more pronounced in idiom, as though the fat black lands of the rice fields had bestowed some of their virility on the speech that flowed above them. Even after the Sixties, which wrecked and beggared the land, and altered the whole social face of the country, the old dialect survived. Plantations began to slip back into the wilderness from which they had been shaped, until most of them are now only names to map a desolation, or titles to illustrate a genealogy. As the plantations declined, the negroes left them, sometimes for the towns, sometimes for little communities of their own tucked away in the pinewoods. Here they remained, small farmers, wood cutters or hunters, in a country where there was but little reason for a white man to go. Untouched by a changing world, they became in their isolation more uncouth of tongue than their plantation ancestors.

The Great War with the draft, changed all this. Young men came out from the woods; and the demand for cheap labor kept them from returning. The automobile has opened the country as nothing else could. Roads and schools have come. It may not be so long before Gullah is a lost tongue; and the point of view and tales that go with it will have vanished. Therefore the fiction writer performs a semi-historic function when he sympathetically records all three.

The word Gullah has been used in three senses; to describe a sort of negro specifically different from a

Guinea; as an adjective implying ugliness or uncouthness, particularly with regard to speech; and, with that implication, as the name of the dialect in general. Its source is most probably African, but its derivation is a moot point. In the accounts of Denmark Vesey's rebellion the men of his lieutenant, Gullah Jack, are described as Gullah, or Angola, negroes. An elision of the first syllable of Angola, or the addition of an easily acquired African *n*, turning Gullah to "Ngullah," makes very good phonetic etymology, and Angola has been the traditional source of the name. It touches classic ground too, for Angola, the old Portuguese possession, half-way down the coast between the Gulf of Guinea and the Cape of Good Hope, was the first point of contact between negro Africa and modern Europeans.

John Bennett, the author of *Madame Margot,* etc., whose long and careful study of the subject makes him an authority, is emphatic in the belief, however, that it comes from a people called Golas, or Goras, once a powerful and warlike tribe of Western Liberia, whose numbers in the slave population of South Carolina, and whose marked physical and lingual characteristics tend to confirm the theory. They did not use a common Bantu dialect, and racially they differed from even the neighboring negroes. Their speech was a guttural staccato that made a Dutchman nickname them the "Quaquas," because they gabbled like geese. A Gola negro on a plantation was a marked man, his quacking tongue alone would betray him; and his speech was "gullah" (uncouth) to the other negroes. With dramatic justice their general jargon became "Gullah" to the white man.

Sir Harry Johnston, the great authority on Africa,

hints a surmise that the Golas may tie in with the Galas, whose touch of Hamitic-Egyptian civilization seems to have given the original Bantus their ability to dominate the people with whom they came in contact.

What survives of African inheritance in Gullah are: a number of rhymes, games, and systems of counting; tricks of the tongue; and a few words in common usage, most of which, so far as we can identify them, come from the Umbundu dialect of Angola. As a rule these words relate to things of ancient African experience; beliefs that were not derived from and never have been shared with the white man; or plants and animals that the negro knew as well, or even better than the European. A thorough search of the Low Country would probably yield some twenty or more words of African derivation, of which six or seven are in common use.

Hoodoo (or *voodoo*), *buckra,* and *Ki* (the characteristic negro expression of surprise or disgust) have run over into fairly general use. A fresh-water turtle, only too common an object to a dweller on the Niger or the Congo, but a strange beast to an Englishman, remains a *kouta,* even if nowadays spelled, *cooter.* The sweet potato took the transferred name of a similar African tuber, *unyamo,* dropped first and last syllables, and became a *yam.* Peanuts, which the English and Charlestonians call groundnuts, have remained for the same reasons, *pindas* or *goobers.* Goobers, in fact, are such a badge of the Georgians that "Goober-grabber" is a traditional name for natives.

Hoodoo is an example of the persistence of a word connected with beliefs most important in the life of a Carolina negro. God is in his heaven there, as else-

where, but the world is presided over by a string of more or less disagreeable supernatural beings, "Sperits," and their natural kin, such as the personification of everyday worries, like Trouble which Br' Rabbit entices Br' Alligator to visit. Thus when grass, "Mr. Green," is thick in a cotton patch, and a July sun is hot on your back, "de Monkey"—exhaustion—is mighty apt to get you along towards midday. *Stepney* is hunger. Stepney is also popular as a given name, possibly because of the old belief that a bad name averts ill luck. Call a child by so despicable a name as Hunger, and even the devils wouldn't bother with him. Fortunately there seems to be one alleviating factor in this Manicheean theology, a canny little personal genius, the "blind god," who, if he is not exactly a Guardian Angel, at least gives very good advice. He is the embodiment of the "hunch," the god of the subconscious.

Of the other surviving African words, *buckra* is a wide-spread bit of slave slang, deriving through *bakara* from *mbakara* which, by syllabic pruning, becomes *makara* and *kara;* the last, in Efik, stands for "one of encompassing power." Sometimes it is used in Gullah as an adjective; a white potato is a *buckra-yam. Nyam* (to eat), as a word meaning flesh, runs through a great number of the Bantu dialects. *Yoonuh* or *oonah* (you), in its African forms is so closely related phonetically to the English word as to show the ease of transference.

Of the contributions to the verbal peculiarities of Gullah, other than English, there are two words of probable French origin. When a man is "fed up" with a thing, in Gullah parlance it "*bexes* (or *wexes*) him for *sowl*"; i.e. he is vexed to (or for) repletion, and

AFRICAN DERIVATIONS OF GULLAH WORDS

ENGLISH	GULLAH	UMBUNDU	KISIKONGO	MANDINGO	EFIK	ATAM
White-man	Buckra				Mbakara Makara	Makara
You, Ye, Your	Oonah Yoonah	Enu, Yenu	Yeno	Ilou		Nye Oya
Eat (Meat)	Nyam	Nyama (Suckle)			Unam (Meat)	Inyum Nyam (Meat)
Sweet Potato, Yam	Yam	Unyamo Inhame				VAI Jambi (Wild Yam) WOLOF Nyambi-(Yam)
Turtle	Cooter	Fulcututu		Kouta	Ikut	
Peanut, Ground-nut	Pinda Goober	Olongupa Jinguba	Nguba Mpinda			
Louse	Oule	Ona Oluliso (Bedbug)				
Plenty	Toko					OGWI Joku-(Plenty) Toko-(Great)

the old French word *saoul* means exactly that. Rice cooked with cow-peas and a chine of pork forms a delectable dish, called in the Low Country, *Hoppin-John*. Now the French name for cow-peas was *pois-de-pigeon* which might be easily twisted into the other form.

The English sources, as we have indicated before, were multiple and various. John Bennett has traced many of them in his articles on Gullah, in the South Atlantic Quarterly Review; and Cruikshanks has shown others in "Black Talk," his study of dialect in Guiana and Barbados. The speech readily demonstrates many of these to an observant ear.

The Gullah negro can be as Cockney as Samivel Veller, and speak of *werry* and *wegitables*. He also trifles with his *h*, transforms a hammer to a *'ammer*, and gives a surname like Adger a mutation into Hodgers. *B* and *w* sometimes twist themselves about. Faber (again a surname) is rendered elegantly Favers, even Flavers; and, in compensation *b* is put in elsewhere, to serve as either *v*, or *w*, which is going "Pickwick Papers" something better. In the Low Country, white and black alike soften *calm*, and *psalm*, and *palm*, to make them rhyme with *Sam*, in the manner of the English of Dublin. There are a round dozen of traceable archaic usages, coming from nearly as many English counties. Edisto Island in particular is supposed to owe the proverbial richness of its pronunciation to the number of Scotch and Welsh who settled there, and a flavor of Lancashire is supposed to be diffused throughout the dialect.

Dr. Krapp, of Columbia University, finds no traceable influence of African grammar in Gullah; but then

grammar of any sort is a negligible quantity. A verb is a verb, why conjugate it? Time, past, present, and future, meant little after all to the plantation hand. Case and number of nouns? Merely confusion! If one pronoun can be made to do the work of six and at the same time be cut to a single vowel, why not? He shortened to *e* serves for she, and it, and their possessive and objective forms, besides. Even articles are omitted, or adjusted, to give a swing to a sentence. Yet trouble is taken and given in forming the words to the comfort of African tongues and ears. Thence come many of the language's tricks. Prefixes come, go, or metamorphose. An initial *n* or *y* slips in to give color to words; young turns to nyoung, and eye to yeye, a Yankee is a Nyankee, the nation is the Newnited States, and the Earth is the Yearth. The prefix starting with a vowel is especially apt to be jettisoned. Explain may become 'splain or in moments of unctuous zeal, change its first syllable in a most unreasonable fashion, and turn to resplain.

Th is abhorrent. As Dr. Reed Smith points out, if it is voiced, as in then, it turns to *d* and gives *den.* If it is unvoiced, as in thing, the *h* is lost and *t'ing* results. The same word may take several related forms, for emphasis, from its neighborhood, or from just plain cussedness. *Just* may be *jes'*, or *jis'*, or *jus'*; *little* is *li'l,* or, more emphatically, *leetle.* With a small scope of vocabulary and grammar vocal modulations have to be put to work. The servant who came in to light a fire in the morning and was asked by his master whether it was cold, replied, " 'E cold, but 'e aint so cold, but 'e cold, dough." This meant that while the weather was noticeably cold it was not extraordinarily so. It is not hard to

explain, but how can you make printed words say it as it was delivered?

Both strange invention and sheer corruption flourish. Perhaps the outstanding Gullah phrases which begin and end questions are the best examples. Thus: *enty* (aint he?), in which the word *he* answers not only for itself, but for *she, it, they,* and *you.* It is tacked on to add emphasis: "De t'ing been y'own, enty?" Likewise, there is the query, "Mek-so?" "Mek-so you aint done 'em?" expands literally into, "What makes it so that you have not done it?" Or, "Why didn't you?"

In the same category are the classic abbreviations that Dr. Smith gives in his monograph on Gullah. " 'E see 'em," syncopated into " 'E shum," may mean:

$$\left.\begin{matrix}\text{He}\\\text{She}\\\text{It}\end{matrix}\right\} \text{ sees / saw } \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{her}\\\text{him}\\\text{it}\\\text{them}\end{matrix}\right.$$

"Uh yeddy 'em, but uh aint shum," stronger Gullah than we dared to inflict ordinarily on the reader, yields sixty-four possible translations, of which you may take your choice:

$$\text{I } \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{hear}\\\text{heard}\end{matrix}\right\} \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{him}\\\text{her}\\\text{it}\\\text{them}\end{matrix}\right\} \text{ but I } \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{didn't}\\\text{don't}\end{matrix}\right\} \text{ see } \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{him}\\\text{her}\\\text{it}\\\text{them}\end{matrix}\right.$$

Among unusual Gullah words and phrases are:—

Anch	—Ant
Bowdacious	—audacious
Bubbuh	—brother

Cubbitch	—miserly; covetous
Dainjous	—dangerous
Duh	—do
Joug (or juke)	—punch
Muckle	—myrtle
quile	—coil
quizzit (or squizzit)	—question closely
piggin	—small cedar pail
Day-clean (fust day)	—dawn
Harry-dick	—an adolescent bull
Horse gunjur	—horse-shaped gingerbread
'Pon-top	—upon top of
Suck he teet'	—contemptuous, whistling inhalation
Stief (or t'ief)	—steal
Succa	—such as
Swinge	—singe
Swink	—shrink
Swonger	—swagger
Task	—measure of distance
Timperish	—timorous
Toad	—female dog
Turrah	—t'other; other
Turreckly	—directly
'Tority	—authority
Yeddy	—hear

After all, phonetics seem to have been more important to the negro in forming Gullah than anything so abstruse as grammar. The Bantu dialects that nearly all of the people had spoken were musical in their very

form. The words sing themselves: *oluliso, makara, fulcututu,* are graceful as Italian. Single consonants usually divide the vowels and break the words up into a regular tempo.

African music has touched Gullah deeply. The voice is pitched low, the tone is resonant, and the rhythm pronounced. What happens with all negro speech seems peculiarly easy in this dialect. In emotion, the quality of rhythm increases and the spoken word is intoned; then, as the feeling intensifies, it may at last be sung, so that a spiritual may grow spontaneously from the pulsing of a repeated phrase. This was one of the things that the African tongue did to English speech.

The other great African contribution with which we are concerned is the folk-story. Tales have gone wherever the negro has, with but few changes in plot or circumstance, but with a most amusing variation in casting. African fashion, their *dramatis personæ* are practically all animals, behaving largely as men, but still keeping certain real or imagined characteristics of their proper natures.

The plots so often strain credulity that it must have been felt that it was only proper that the actors should be comprehensible, and the stories, as they went from country to country, discarded old and took up new *faunæ*. So it is with Br' Rabbit, the hero, the Hercules-Ulysses-Loki of negro mythology. He is uncanny throughout Africa. He is strangely powerful, to be respected accordingly, and tabooed for food even so far north as the Palestine of the Levitical books. But in Liberia, there are no rabbits to speak of. Recasting occurred; Br' Rabbit was dropped, and a little deer, round-

eared, big-eyed and nimble-footed, takes the leading part in the stories. The Fang tribe used the turtle; and in the West Indies, *Anansi*, the spider, wears the hero's raiment. The convention about this character is everywhere the same. He is a smallish, weak creature, who, despite his handicaps, by sheer wit or bravado, and often by means of the most questionable sort, gets the better of nearly all who come in contact with him. He is so audacious that in one of the South Carolina stories that we give, he storms high Heaven to try his wiles on God.

Acting as a foil is a second character, usually an embodiment of dumbness and ferocity, on whom the hero loves to practice. Mr. Leopard seems to have been the most popular actor for this part in Africa. When the stories were transplanted to the West Indies, the tiger appears in the rôle, an exception to prove the rule; because he, like the lion and the elephant, was probably a sufficiently realized creature not to need ocular demonstration. The negroes began to tell the stories in Carolina when the wolf was still common, and quite enough given to the pursuit of rabbits to excuse a number of legends. Further inland, in the "Up-Country" of Uncle Remus, Br' Wolf had probably disappeared before the plantations grew up. There was, however, the ubiquitous fox, who, if not so virile as the wolf, was equally given to the hunting of Br' Rabbit; and Uncle Remus' second man is usually Brer Fox.

The titles, such as *Br'* Alligator, or *Sis'* Nanny Goat are other African survivals. The translated stories dub the characters *Mr.* Rabbit, or *Mr.* Antelope, and on the plantations *Brudder* and *Sister*, used between negroes,

was the equivalent in respect, with possibly a little of Methodist unction added.

In this chronicle we have not given, nor have we intended to give, a scientific rendering of either folk-tales or dialect. To secure clarity we have modified the conventional Gullah orthography considerably. We have restored certain pronouns and simplified some structural forms, but we have retained several seeming inconsistencies of word variations, and we have observed and used as far as possible the construction of the dialect, its rhythm of delivery, and its magnificent verbiage.

All of the stories have some foundation of tradition. Several have been handed down for generations by family negroes. Two stand practically as originally told. Br' Rabbit's search for a long tail came direct from Davey Gourdine, of Medway Plantation, son of Dublin Gourdine, and grandson of an African princess—traded by her royal father (according to her account of it) for some yards of red flannel, and brought "ober seben ribber to dis country." *Adam and Eve* comes from Abe Milner, one of the "Woodburn" negroes, by whom it was told to Augustine T. Smythe, of Charleston, whose dramatic vocal rendering of it far outstrips mere print. Although the full stories of the others have not been known till now, Sis' Nanny Goat and her troubles are proverbial. If you are improvidently generous, you are warned, "Tek care! You know 'Kind heart gi' Sis' Nanny Goat a short tail!' " For them all we have tried to make our fictional development fill in the action and setting that the embodied beliefs or themes of these stories deserve.

For the rest we have seen a great possibility, the reconciliation of science and scripture. The simple yet subtle perception of the negro has settled questions on which Doctors of Divinity and their brothers of Philosophy have long disagreed. Could the account of Cain and his goings-on be added to the canon, any Fundamentalist and Henry Fairfield Osborne might lie down together as brethren—that is, provided, of course, that they wanted to. Had these broad bases of reconciliation only been brought forth sooner, the calamitous doings at Dayton in Tennessee might have been altogether avoided. States might have gone pro- instead of anti-evolution or, better still, have dropped the subject entirely.

Out of the mouths of babes and savages, this running commentary on moot points of genetics and genesis comes with the ingenious simplicity of Congo sculpture, and these Gullah stories may offer, to those vexed and troubled by such matters, a probable if not possible explanation of a great many of the most inscrutable puzzles of Creation. As a note on acquired, not to speak of lost, characteristics we hope that this chronicle has its place in the sun.

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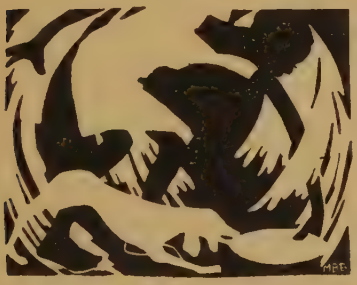
I

CREATION

CREATION

I God maketh the World and living things; II He beginneth evolution; III Sin cometh, IV and Trouble followeth; V and the Tame separate from the Wild.



In de beginnin' God been jus' a-projeckin' roun' in de element. Aint been no Eart' nor no Hebben. So, for please heself, he start for mek 'em.

De fust goin'-off he mek de day an' de night, an' de Sun for glorify him by day, an' de Moon by night. Only de Moon aint specify so good—it aint shine so bright. So God stick up a whole lot o' star in de hebbens, for braughtus (good measure).

'Sides dat, he git Hebben all fixed up for him to lib in, wid a fine Big House an' a long Abenue leadin' up to it, an' pearly gate for go in, an' a whole lot o' Cherubims and Seraphims for wait on him, an' tek care o' de place.

When God git kind o' satisfy wid de sky, he turn he han' to de Eart'. He fool roun' an' fool roun', till he hab a big mud pie, de kind dat chillen does mek. Den, for see how de dirt stan' by heself, he ditch it good an' draw off de water, an' he mek all dem ribber, an' creek, an' branch.

He mos' gib up when dem mud-flat come up out o' de water, dey look dat sad. But he ain' res' yet. He hoe

dem up good, an' start a lot o' grass, an' bush, an' tree, for kibber dem. An' de sun-hot git into dat dirt, an' mek de seed grow fas', an' it help for dry up de lan', an' 'fore night eberyt'ing begin for look nice.

Seem like God start on dis light work jus' for git he hand in. By de end o' t'ree day, he been fix eberyt'ing so dey run 'long stiddy-like. On de fourt' day he look at all de water, so big an' empty, an' he fill it up wid all sort o' catfish, an' eel, an' fiddler-crab, an' all dem kind.

Den God turn he eye on de element, an' all dose nice tree, an' bush, standin' so lonesome-like. An' what he done for de water wid fish, he done for de element wid fowl. He mek tuckry an' tuckry-buzzard, an' de duck, an' de rice-bird, an' all dem t'ing what hab fedders or wings—all o' dem leetle flyin' bug, de skeeter, an' gnat, an' wasp.

De work o' de fift' day been eben mo' harder, 'cause den God git down to de groun', an' he mek all de beasts; de goat, an' de horse, an' de cow, de mice an' de rat, de coon an' de possum, de cooter (turtle) an' de alligator, de wolf, an' de elephant, an' de lion. It keep him mighty busy, but de he-male an' de fre-male, God created he dem.

Now all o' dem creeter what God mek on de fourt' an' de fift' day aint stan' like God stan'. Day aint nothin' but beas'es. Dem aint eben been like dey is today—dey is different in all sort o' ways—but mostly de difference is dat at de fus' goin'-off, God aint gi' dem no tails, nor no mout's. Seem like dey might be better off widout 'em. Dem wouldn't hab to eat nothin', so dey wouldn't hab to work, nor fight, nor steal, to get dey bittle

(victuals). Den dey aint hab to agonize so 'bout how dey goin' to git long, an' dat will make dem all de more peacable. Dey aint goin' to talk none, an' dat alone will save a heap o' trouble; all de argifyin', an' 'sputin', an' cussin', an' fussin', wouldn't hab a chance for tek place. De he-males an' de fre-males is goin' to mek out too much better wid each other when dey aint a chance neither for bitin' nor back-bitin'.

An' if nothin' bite 'em, an' dey aint *need* tail to bresh dem stingin' t'ing 'way wid, what's de use for hab tail at all? Dat how-come God leave 'em off. He fix 'em for lub one anudder, an' jus' roam roun' all day widout bodder 'bout nothin' but keepin' company. An' he mek 'em so dey kin understan' widout word o' mout' betwix' 'em. De only word roun' 'bout is de Word o' God, which dey only needs ears for hear.

But while God been workin' on dem beas', stid o' goin' off 'bout dey business where dey belong, dey crowd roun' him, curious-like. Dem push in, an' pry 'bout, an' git in de way, jus' for see what he is goin' to mek next. God stop an' study he head a minute, an' figger if he could fix heself a right smart creeter for keep dem t'ing in dey place, he would git 'long more better. So he turn in an' mek Br' Dog.

From de start-off Br' Dog been a big help. He herd all dem beas' away, jus' by 'suasion. He been so handy 'bout de place dat God wonder he didn't mek him a long time before. By ebenin' o' dat fift' day God been so please wid him till, when he knock off work an' start for home, he whistle to Br' Dog an' tek him along.

When he git to de Big House in Hebben, God eben let Br' Dog come in outn de yard an' lie down longside

he gol' t'rone in front de fireplace, an' Br' Dog is so happy dat when God reach over an' pat he head an' scratch back o' he ears, dat in no time dey git mighty sociable, till at las' when one dem Seraphims come in, wid a nice white apron on, an' say supper is ready, God eben let Br' Dog come on in de dinin' room for watch him eat.

Br' Dog is mighty polite, but he sure did tek a whole lot o' interest in de way God nyam (ate) his bittles. Ebery time God' fork, eeder he spoon, lef' de plate, Br' Dog eye ketch it an' gone wid it right to he mout', an' den drop back to de plate an' look bery hard at what been lef'. Same way he watch ebery t'ing dem Cherubims an' Seraphims fetch an' carry, till God can't help but notice de way he is doin'.

So when God been jis' about done, an' feelin' real good wid all he nice supper, he stop, an' he look at Br' Dog. An' he study a bit, an' he say to one o' dem leetle Cherubim what been fixin' to tek 'way de dishes, "Boy! Fetch me some o' dem wood ashes outn de chimbly."

Den he say to Br' Dog, "Come here, suh! You been work so fait'ful all o' dis lib-long day, since I mek you, till I can't set comfortable here an' seen you fret you'-self 'bout what dem bittle is. Mebbe dis t'ing is goin' to gib you mo' o' trouble dan pledjur, but I is jis' bleege to cut you a mout' so I kin see you nyam some o' dem scrap what is lef', an' find out what dey tas'e like."

II

An' den God tek dat gold knife what he use for cut he bittle. He gib it a lick on he shoe-sole, for sharpen de blade good. Den he gi' Br' Dog a fine mout', wid

white teet', an' red tongue, to trim up he face nice. An' he tek some salt outn de salt cellar, an' a little o' de wood ashes what de Cherubim bring him, an' rub on Br' Dog mout' for stop de bleedin'.

Br' Dog been mos' crazy, he is so happy. He bark, an' he bark, he bow down, an' he shake heself all ober, like he was tryin' to wag dat tail he aint got yet. He jump 'bout an' mek a big 'miration, till one dem Cherubim put down a plate full o' dem scrap, wid a lot o' spoon bittle an' pot-licker an' sich-like suption on dem, an' call him. Den he gone a-runnin', an' he tek one good sniff at it, an' it aint no time before dat plate is jis' as clean as a whistle. Dey aint a sign o' dem scrap lef'. Br' Dog gi' de plate one las' good lick, for mek sure dat he aint lef' nothin', an' gone back to God for tell him how tenksful he is for all He done for him. He been so happy he wants God to p'int him a task dat minute, for let him show jis' how much good dat mout' an' de taste o' dat bittle done him.

"Nemmine dat now!" God tell him, "Jis' you wait little bit an' you will git a chance before too long. You done a-plenty dis day already." An' he pat Br' Dog head, till turreckly he settle down an' fall sleep 'side de fire.

Nex' mornin' early, God start out for plant a Garden. He been study he head bout dat t'ing for a good while, an' already have pick' out a nice piece o' groun' ober to de east o' Eden, dat jus' fit him fine.

When he come out in de yard Br' Dog come a-runnin' for say "Mornin'." He jump up at him, barkin' an' frolickin'.

God tell him, "Be quiet," an', "Down, charge!"

But Br' Dog is so crazy-fool ober he new mout' dat he can't contain himself. An' before God kin make him stop, he run 'bout an' raise sich a racket dat all de beast come a-runnin' to see what is de matter, an' who is makin' sich a gran' noise.

God holler at Br' Dog so till he is shut up he mout', but as he walk behind he is bleege to show off 'fore de turrah creeter'. An' dem begins to crowd close, an' mek a regular gang 'bout God an' him.

As dey walk 'long, dem gone by a branch. Br' Dog hab to lap de water, an' what a rookus dat start! Eben de fish got to jump up out de water for regard him. De creeter most climb on top o' one anudder for see dat t'ing; an' dey nearly bus' out cryin' wid de pure enby to see how much o' pledjur he git out o' it. He git a burr twixt he toe, an' he set down, an' pull it out wid he teet' jis' as fait'ful, an' all de creeter what hab sof' feet mos' pop dey eye' out, to see de way he done. Little mud git on he side, an' when he lick dat off Sis' Cat begin for agonize to do de same!

Dat aint all. 'Cause he choose he chance an' let dem hab a little word 'bout how he eat God 'bittle, an' how sweet dem tas'e. Dat's all dem need. Before dat it been bad enough, but now!!! Look like de whole gang aint want nothin' *but* mout', an' dey been bleege to run ober to where God is beginnin' to lay off dat garden, an' start to beg an' pray de bes' way dem know how, for him to gi' mout' to dem, too.

Been jis' like de day before, only worse. Den dey is only crowd 'bout for see; but now de whole kit an' bilin', leetle, sizable, an' big, is doin' dey bes' for set up

on dey hunkers an' hol' up dey front foots, jis' a-beggin' an' beseechin'.

God tell Br' Dog, "Clear dem outn de way."

But Br' Dog can't done a t'ing wid dem dis day.

Den dey git so t'ick about God till at last he gib up. He scratch he head, an' he look at Br' Dog, an' he say, "You an' you' mout' raise a fine rookus roun' here today! Now none o' dese creeters aint goin' to be satisfy till dey git mout' as well."

"If you done dat for dem, Suh, dey sure goin' to praise an' glorify you' name dis day an' foreber."

"Huh! But dat aint goin' to keep up de whole time!"

"Dem kin keep deyself lookin' a whole lot nicer!"

"Don't tell me all dat! Boy! I study all dem t'ing. If dem mout' is mek, dey sure is got to be fill, an' dat's a mighty host to feed. Cose dey kin eat grass an' green bittle, but some aint goin' to rest wid jis' dem t'ing."

He stop an' pull at he whispers.

"But *do*, Maussuh," Br' Dog say, "Please, suh, if you could be so kind an' gi' dem mout'! Jis' like you done me, 'cause dat t'ing gi' me too much o' pledjur already——"

"Taint goin' to be too bad for dem creeter what is 'sponsible, but, for de mostest part, de more newfanglety dey git de worse off dey stan'. But when dem what is 'sponsible *aint* 'sponsible, like you been dis mornin', dat's when Trouble comin' in."

Br' Dog jis' say, "*Do*, Maussuh!"

An' de creeter all bow down, still a-beggin'.

God sorter squinch up he forehead an' cock he head on one side, an' say, "Well! 'Bout dey ration—if dem can't satisfy wid grass an' t'ing, I reckin dey'll be bleege

to hunt live bittle. But dis day I is got to done de work I set for dis day, an' I want me mind free to mek dis garden widout all dese creeter bodderin' me 'bout cut dem mout'."

Br' Dog see he chance. "Why I can't done dat for a task, for help you out?"

"Uh huh! Mebbe you kin!"

"If you is show me how to done de t'ing, jis' to de fust, I suttinly could done it good in a leetle while."

Den God turn roun' to de beas'es an' say, "All right, my frien's! I mek you widout mout' for sabe you a whole lot o' bodder. But I reckin de best I kin do now is gi' mout' to you, an' learn you not to ax for too much. . . . "

Wid dat de beas' all begin for cutchy (curtsy), an' mek manners for show how glad dey is, an' tenksful. But God wabe he hand at dem, an' dey set still agin, an' listen.

"I goin' p'int Br' Dog here for mek mout' for you, jis' as I is mek mout' for him." (Br' Dog begin to swell up wid pride.) "Now you got to act mannersable, an' aint to quarrel or 'spute wid Br' Dog, nor one anudder, needer when he is workin' on you nor afterwards. An', as for you," he say to Br' Dog, "Look out you aint git smart-Alecky, an' mind you done a good job. Don't hab none o' dese creeters comin' back here for me to fix up when you is done wid 'em. 'Member good dat de way you put de mout' to dem, dat's de way dem is goin' to hab to stan'."

Br' Dog say, "Jis' so, Maussuh! Yessuh!" An' all dem creeters wag dey head for show dey understand, an' bow down an' bow down before God.

At las' God say, "Go on now! I had enough o' dat! An' if you want mout' git away from dis garden right quick, an' gone ober in dat West fiel' an' wait on Br' Dog. *Go.*"

Br' Dog say, "I'll fix dem, Suh! Nebber you fear, I'll do jis' dat." An' he start out de garden treadin' high. He figger dat when he is done dis t'ing de creeter is goin' to be dat satisfy dat dey will sholy p'int him de King Beas' o' de Yearth. When he git toward dat west fiel' an' dem seen him a-comin', dey jis' run at him a-scramblin', an' a-pushin' an' a-shovin', till he say: "Here, mek way! Mek way, so I kin work good. I can't so much as git me elbow out—git in line now, an' tek you' turn!"

Fust, he recide for try he han' on Br' Goat, 'cause Br' Goat ain' too big, an' he ain' too leetle, an' he had dem horn an' dem whispers, all-two, for Br' Dog to git a fine hand-holt on. Br' Dog cock he head on one side an' shet he eye an' stedy Br' Goat good. Den he turn Br' Goat turrah-side-to, an' shet he turrah eye, an' he cock he head on de turrah side. Den he gib he gol' knife a good lick on he shoe, an' he pull up he sleeve, an' he spit on he han'. He tek Br' Goat' head under he

arm, so he can't wiggle an' spoil de cut. An' den he grab he knife, an' he say, "Now, hol' still, Brudder—don't jump—an' I will gib you de bes' lookin' mout' in de settlement."

Look like Br' Dog been jus' de man to do dis job, for he is smart, an' quick, an' mannersable, an' he aint 'fraid o' blood, like some is. An' what is bes', he han' don't swell a wound when he touch it. An' he gi' Br' Goat a good 'nough mout'. Den he tek a leetle ashes an' salt, like de Lawd done 'struct him, an' rub on de cut, till de bleedin' been stop an' de mout' cured. An' fus' t'ing you know, Br' Goat is walkin' about jus 'like he had a mout' from de werry beginnin', an' talkin' proud in dat little bleetey voice o' he-own, till you might t'ink he aint nebber goin' to hush up again.

Br' Dog been dat please, an' all de turrah creeter too, till dey press him to work mo' fas'. All de time he work, he talk so nice dat eberybody been laughin' an' satisfy. He joke an' dey joke. He aint hardly had any trouble for fix 'em. Dey is all peaceable yit. All de same, de job push Br' Dog sort o' strong, 'cause eberybody gotta hab a mout' right now. He fix Br' Hoss, an' Br' Cow, an' Br' Cat, an' he aint scarcely through wid one batch befo' here come de nex', an' he is dat busy he ain' hardly had chance to swallow he spittle.

Den too, what wid all dem creeter tryin' out dey new voice, dey been such a noise roun' dat west fiel' till Br' Dog head ache him wid de racket an' he been bleege to say: "For cry-out sake! How kin I work wid all dis goin's-on! Mek-so you can't hol' up on some o' dat fuss?"

Dey stop, but not for long, so sometime Br' Dog han'

slip, an' some o' de leetle beas' git big mout', an' some o' de big beas' ain' git near mout' enough. Look like Br' Gnat, an' Br' Skeeter, an' Br' Tick is so leetle, an' dey mout' so big, dat Br' Dog might ha' 'spicioned dat dey can't nebber git satisfy! But de creeter deyself aint know 'nough den to complain. Dey ain' rightly understan' till dey been older dat de bigger dey mout', de mo' harder dey is goin' to hab to work for fill 'em.

Eberybody stay roun' for watch, an' see, an' sing praise. Nobody gone 'way, 'cause dey all been boun' to yeddy (hear) de kind o' voice de nex' one gwine to hab, an' look how Br' Dog cut dey mout'.

III

Br' Dog work an' work, an' at las' he see de end o' de line. 'Taint a bit too soon, either, 'cause fus' dark like to ketch him, an' he dat tired wid choppin' on dem creeter till he mos' broke in two. He git t'rough wid waitin' on Br' Cooter, an' de fish, an' t'ing, an' t'ink dat Br' Alligator come nex'. But jus' den Br' Sarpint come slidin' 'long. An' he is so fas' an' so 'ceitful, dat jus' as Br' Dog is 'bout to handle Br' Alligator, Br' Sarpint stuck he head in, in front.

Br' Dog t'ink dat it mus' be dat de Sarpint is been dere all de time, so he gi' him de nex' turn, an' trim he mout' for him. But jus' as he git ready to let go o' him, he seen Br' Gator stickin' out he jaw, an' kind o' mumblin' to heself, like be bexted (vexed), an' some o' de udder creeter, what had mout' already, cry out, "Ki! You let Br' Sarpint fool you dat time! He stole Br' Alligator' place."

Br' Dog git mad, 'cause dis is de first creeter what try

any trick on him dat whole day, so he tek a new holt on Br' Sarpint—'spite o' de way he twis' roun' an' try for git way—an' he say, "You no-manners debbil! How you kin steal Br' Alligator' turn, an' try for fool me too?"

Br' Sarpint start for 'spute he word, an' say he aint done it. But Br' Goat tell on him. "Dat aint all! Br' Sarpint been clean to de foot o' de line, an' he is stief (steal) he way ahead o' eberybody else what been dere waitin'."

"Is dat so?" Br' Dog ax Br' Sarpint.

"Taint so! You lie, an' you know you lie," Br' Sarpint tell Br' Goat.

But a lot o' de udder creeter what been dere say Br' Goat speak de trut', an' Br' Dog see Br' Sarpint is de liar when he turn on Br' Dog, an' cuss him too, an' say, "Why aint you turn me loose?"

Br' Dog git dat bex he grab de Sarpint real tight an' tell him, "If you had act deestent (decent) to de Breddren an' Sistren, or eben been sorry when I is ketch you, an' beg pardon, I would 'a' turn' you loose, but you behabe so nasty an' low till no creeter kin call you brudder no mo'. After dis you aint *Br'* Sarpint no longer, you is jis' *Sarpint!* Now I is goin' to mark you for your debiltry so you can nebber forgit!"

An' wid dat he pry open de Sarpint' mout' an' split he tongue, so from dat day to dis he talk in dat little hissin' way, "Sssh, Ssssh, Sssssh," jis' like he is all de time whisperin' a meanness.

Before dat de Sarpint been close frien' to Satan an' full o' he tricks, but since den he aint only content wid bein' wicked heself, but he got to learn all de res' o' de creeters for hab Sin.

IV

When de Sarpint crep' off in de crowd o' creeter, Br' Dog feel kind o' shamed at de way he done los' he temper an' turn roun' for tend to Br' Gator. He 'member what God say 'bout gittin' mad, an' he t'ink he will done he bes' for mind he manners wid dis creeter.

He see Br' Gator is onrestless 'cause he had to wait out o' he turn, an' Br' Dog is 'fraid den dat he is goin' to hab some trouble wid him. But Br' Dog aint begin for know what a time he is in for till he start to cut Br' Gator' mout'.

Br' Gator signify jus' how he mout' is to fix. He mek Br' Dog understand dat he t'ink a whole lot o' he looks, an' he mout' mus' gone good wid he face. He gib out dat he been a mighty delicate creeter, an' he mout' got to match he disposition.

Br' Dog pay 'tention to all Br' Gator's direction, an' he peruse 'bout Br' Gator's face awhile till he mek up he mind how he is goin' to trim it. Dat face aint look too delicate to him, but he reckin he kin git him a mout' dat won't look too bad, spite o' de place it got to be in. Den he say to Br' Gator, "All right, my frien', I goin' fix you like you is want me to. Jus' a minute now. Hol' yo' groun'!"

He reach for Br' Gator's head, but Br' Gator back back out o' reach. Look like he aint satisfy 'bout de 'structions he gi' Br' Dog. He got to show him how he mout' mustn't be too big nor too little, but jus' right. Now a lot o' time pass wid all o' dis an' some o' de creeter git to fussin'.

De Sarpint see dat good, an' he start to gone 'bout hissin' an' whisperin' 'mongst dem, puttin' notion in

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dey head 'bout how long Br' Dog tek, an' how clumsy he is, till a lot o' dem most lost dey patience altogedder.

Dey mek motion to Br' Dog not to keep 'em waitin'. Dey beg him for hurry, so dem kin git dey-own turn, an' git through, an' gone home 'fore dark ketch 'em on de road.

Br' Dog speak dem easy an' reach for Br' Gator's head, but again de contrady (contrary) creeter rear back, an' shake he head loose. Look like he 'member 'bout somet'ing he forgit to tell Br' Dog, an' he start all over again wid he directions.

Br' Dog try hard for be mannersable, an' pay Br' Gator close 'tention. He say, "Uh-huh! Yes, suh. I know jus' exackly de way de cut ought to be. Lemme git holt o' yo' head, an' I'll gib you a fine satisfaction wid yo' mout'."

Br' Dog gib he knife annudder lick on he shoe, for braughtus, an' tell him, "Now, come on. De day mos' done, man! Heap' o' people been waitin' on me! Daylight duh burn!"

Dis time Br' Dog get a good holt roun' Br' Gator's head. But Br' Gator too strong. Jus' as Br' Dog tetch him wid de knife he jerk loose so quick dat he mos' mek Br' Dog cut heself wide open.

De Sarpint rear back an' laugh, an' laugh, den, an' say in dat mean little hissin' voice to all dem what is standin' roun', "Ki! Br' Dog is too comical—de way he mos' jab heself dat time!"

Some o' de udder creeter bus' out laughin' wid him, at de way Br' Dog can't handle Br' Gator. Br' Dog don't pay no 'tention to dem, but he so bex, dat he say

to Br' Gator, "What mek you act so timperish-like (timorous) dat you can't trus' me for gib you de mout' you want? I is acknowledged for cut good mout', an' eberybody else is bery well satisfy wid de mout' I gi' dem, widout specify beforehand. Gi' me a chance."

"Why aint you ketch him an' split he fool head wide open?" de Sarpint hiss close to Br' Dog's ear.

An' Br' Dog heard him good, but he try not to mind de mean debbil. He mek anudder grab for Br' Gator's head, an' dat stub-bornt creeter pull 'way, an' look like he goin' start from de first again wid he 'structions. An' dis time he git so mix up in he argifyin' 'bout dat mouth till it seem like he eben argue an' 'spute wid he own self.

Br' Dog's patience jus' wore out. He mek like he turn 'way, so he kin git behin' Br' Gator, an' he watch he chance. All ob a suddent, he mek a grab an' lock Br' Gator's head under he lef' arm, an' he gib he knife such a big swish till 'fore Br' Gator hardly know it, Br' Dog cut him a mout' from years to years! An' as he is done it, Br' Dog cry out, "Dat ought to suit you, suh! You so delicate! You so nice 'bout yo' mout'—You is a ugly creeter nohow, for be so ungodly perjinkety 'bout yo' countenance!"

Mos' o' de creeter what been dere bus' out laughin' an' shoutin' at dat t'ing; but dey don't all agree. De Sarpint tell some o' dem, "Tis a shame an' a sin de way Br' Dog done Br' Gator!" He gone a-slippin' 'bout in de

crowd, an' say dis to dat one, an' dat to dis one, for start a fuss.

Br' Rabbit say right off, "Taint alone Br' Gator dat aint been treat fair. Needer is me myself. Why aint I got a big mout' like Br' Lion?"

An' Br' Cooter complain, "I want a whole lot o' teet'."

Br' Wolf join in, "I aint like de hoarsish voice I hab, eeder."

Br' Lion an' Br' Bear blame Br' Dog for mekin' 'em sing deep, stid o' fine an' sweet.

Look like de Sarpint sho' done he bad work right good!

Po' Br' Dog see from dat, spite o' de way he work for dem, dey aint nebber gwine mek him de King Beas' now, an' he bery sad. Dey been sho' to p'int some pusson what aint done a lick o' work for dem, like dat big-mout' Br' Lion.

V

Br' Dog try not to notice all de 'sputin'. He jus' went 'long cuttin' de res' o' de creeter' face. But all de time Br' Gator is rarin' 'bout, an' rarin' 'bout, an' bellerin'. An' all de creeter what laugh start to stannin' togedder, an' say it serve him right, dat he ought not to been so stupid an' contrady. Dat's Br' Hoss, an' Br' Jackass, an' Br' Cow, an' Br' Goat, an' all o' dem kind. But de creeter what aint satisfy—an' dey been de mostest—say dat it sho' been a shame dat Br' Dog gone an' treat Br' Gator like dat. An' dey whisper, an' fuss, an' git mo' an' mo' outrageous.

At las' when Br' Dog git clean t'rough de line, Br'

Gator beller out, "You chop up my face, you debbil! You is spile de head o' de bes' lookin' man in de settlement."

Br' Dog git good an' angry at dat, an' he say back, "Man! I sorry you so bex! But ebery time you show me tis a diffrent kind o' mout' you want, till at las' I reckin dat de bes' I kin do for you would be to gi' you de whole lot dat you ax for, end to end. An' as dey stan', dey sho' fit dat ugly jowl o' yourn too good."

Dat mek half o' dem creeter, what stan' wid Br' Dog, holler out laughin'. But de half what stan' wid Br' Gator, start to ragin'. Br' Gator been dat bex he can't say nothin' 'tall, no mo'; but he eye' burn, an' he cock he tail, an' he chest swell. An' he walk 'bout, lookin' so comical dat Br' Jackass start wid he fool, "Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" till he like to choke.

By den de Sarpint been yeddy all he care 'bout an' he slide 'way to he own place.

But Br' Gator catch he breat' again, an' start to cuss, an' he cuss hebby. An' dem what side wid him git so bowdacious, too, dat dem creeter what stan' up for Br' Dog all t'ink dat same minute dat it been time to go somewhere else. Br' Dog want bad to git back to de Garden where God is. He start 'long, an' he frien's foller him easy-like. But de creeter what aint satisfy come too, an' mighty soon dey is pickin' on Br' Dog' gang, an' pushin' dem right smart. Tis only because dey aint find out yet much 'bout bein' hongry dat keep Br' Wolf, an' Br' Lion, an' dem, from nyamin' Br' Goat, an Br' Cow, an' dey frien's, den an' dere. Eben so dey nip at dey heels out o' meanness, jis' to mek dem trabble.

When dey git to where God been mekin' de garden, he stop 'em. An' he say, "So you all come back wid a rookus?"

Br' Dog run to him, an' bow down, an' say, "Maus-suh, please, Suh, stop dese creeter wid dey meanness. Look 'pon dem an' see how hard I work to fix 'em up good. An' here dey is at de end, a-chasin' me an' me frien' all de way back here. I jis' ax you, Suh, if dat is any way for dem to do me? Ain't I done a good job, Maussuh?"

God look all roun' at Br' Lion, Br' Rabbit an' Br' Deer, Sis' Hen, Sis' Cat, an' Sis' Nanny-Goat. "Taint sich a bad job," he say.

"Jus' look at me! Look at me! Look at me!" roar Br' Gator.

God look at him. An' den he says, "Some o' dese creeter is all right, an' some is mos' all right. But Br' Gator aint too good, Br' Dog. How come he stan' like dat?"

Br' Dog hang he head an' try to resplain; but Br' Gator roar, "He aint 'tend to what you tell him. An' he aint 'tend to what I tell him. He git short-patience! Stid o' listen to me, he git bex, an' swish he knife, an' cut me mout' from years to years!"

"Dat sho' is look so," God say, "Br' Dog, aint I tell you on no account to git hateful?"

An' Br' Dog tell him 'bout Br' Gator's goin's-on.

God shake he head. "You got sense an' you oughta had patience!"

Br' Gator yell out at Br' Dog, "Now, you see? Now, you see? We Maussuh didn't nebber gib you no leave to spile my looks! Nemmine, Brudder! You is ruin my face—but you jus' wait! Some day you comin' where I

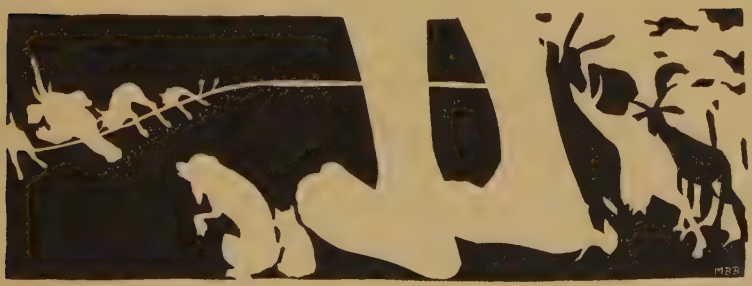
lib, an' if I find you, you look out! I goin' to git eben wid you if I habs to wait till de Judgment day!"

God say to him, "Dat is enough o' dat talk now. You git 'way from here! An' tek care not for act so stupid dat somebody else won't fix you up worse dan Br' Dog done."

Den God look down at Br' Dog a long time, an' Br' Dog tremble an' he whine at he Maussuh feet. At las' God say, kind o' sorrowful-like, "You been mos'ly faithful, but you listen one time to dat Sarpint, an' been hateful. You got to tek de consequence o' yo' own mistake. An' all you creeter what stan' by Br' Dog git in he same fix."

Den Br' Hoss, an' Br' Jack-ass, an' Br' Cow, an' all dem, crowd close roun' Br' Dog, for dem was like yard-chillen, dey is peaceable an' sort o' scary. An' all de creeter what stan' up for Br' Gator scatter out wide away from dere, for dem was woods-chillen, rovin' an' wild. Dat mout' business start sich a big row in de world twix' dem creeter, de tame an' de wild, dat it aint nebber goin' to stop.

An' God jis' stan' an' study, an' stroke he whispers, an' say, "Uh-huh! Beastises an' t'ings gotta be dat way, an' act dat way. Now jus' watch out!"



II

ADAM AN' EBE IN DE GARDEN

VI God deviseth a new model, Man in his innocence. VII Sin reareth its head in the Garden; VIII Retribution IX and the Sign thereof.

VI

When de Garden is all fixed up an' de fench done, God laid down de gold tools he been workin' wid—all o' God's tools is de pure gold—an' he tek a good look around de place. He sure was pleased wid it too, 'cause he had it all planted out nice wid tree, an' bush, an' yarbs, an' flowers. A whole lot o' paths was dere to lead you roun' de place, an' a plenty o' fish-ponds an' creek. God knowed he was goin' to git a good satisfaction walkin' in dat place in the cool o' de day tekin' he pledjur, watchin' de tree growin', an' smellin' dem sweet flowers.

But he aint quite satisfied yet 'cause he knowed it was goin' to be a task for somebody to keep dat place lookin' nice, an' he sho' aint goin' to want to tek care o' it heself. When de spring come in all de grass in de world is goin' to try to set up housekeepin' right in de middle o' dem rose bush an' jasmine-wine.

Somebody got to swing a hoe an' fix it. An' hog is sure to root in under de fench, an' cow to jump ober an' breck dem down.

When he mek up he mind, God tek some clay, an' he model, an' mol', an' fool wid it. An' bye an' bye he mek a t'ing! It stan' just like a man is today cep' God mek it wid a long tail, 'cause he t'ink dat when de summertime come, an' all dem leetle creeter wid big mout' fly 'bout, dat de tail 'll come in handy for bresh 'way skeeter an' gnat, an' den he won't hab to tek he han' off he hoehan'le. When he git dat t'ing all mek-up, God stan' him up 'gainst de fench awhile, for dry off in de sun. Den God breathe hard on him, an' fetch de breat' o' life in de creeter. Tis a man!

"Stan' up, boy! Walk 'bout!" say de Lord.

An' he blink he eye, an' try he leg kind o' carefullike, an' find he kin do what God tell him.

"Now boy," God say, "I name yo' name Adam. I gwine gib you hoe, an' bush-ax, an' t'ing, an' put you in charge o' de garden. You is 'sponsible for eberyt'ing in de place. Keep out all de stock. Cut de grass out de flower-bed an' t'ing. Tek all de wegitable, an' fruit, an' t'ing you need, only leave 'lone dat apple-tree. Save dem for me, 'cause I is bery like apple myself."

An' Adam tell him, "Yes, Maussuh! Yes, Maussuh!" An' mek he manners.

Dat scheme work fine. Adam mek dat grass fly out o' dere, an' taint been no time 'fore he hab dat garden goin' along jus' as nice as kin be. Dat gone on a long while, but bye an' bye God notice Adam sort o' bus' down. De garden begin to look bad. It full up wid weeds

an' trash, an' Adam self didn't look too good. Used to be, when Adam knock off Saturday, middle o' de day, he would gone home an' fix heself so he look nice for Sunday; wash heself, an' shave he face, an' roach he tail. God come on him one Sunday an' he is all raggity. He face dirty, an' he beard growed out, an' he tail been rough as a mule' tail in de summer time, an' full up wid cockle burrs.

God git after Adam, an' gib him de debbil up an' down. Dat mek him pick up for awhile, but 'taint las'. In 'bout two-t'ree weeks he is jus' as bad as ebber. God talk to him, an' try to find out what de matter is.

An' Adam tell him, "Maussuh, I is dat lonesome, don't know what for do. Dere aint nobody round here fit to talk to, or 'sociate wid. Me an' dis garden here to weselves, an' no one is here to help we. Mornin' come I hab to git me own breakfas'. Dinner time, an' I lay off, eeder I habs to bring out a kettle in de mornin', or gone spang to de house, an' cook bittle. When dark come an' I knock off, I habs to chop wood, an' fetch water, an' work 'bout, an' cook supper meself or eat cold. Den de house all dirty, an', tired or not, I habs to sweep, an' dus' roun', an' mek bed, an' clean up all de mess what's lef' from mornin'. Please, Maussuh, what I gwine do?"

God stedy de t'ing awhile, an' den he figger out a plan. He cas' Adam in a strance-like (trance), an' he pluck one o' he rib out o' he side. An' he work on it, an' fus' t'ing you know he is turn out a 'oman. She been jus' like a man, cep'n she is a 'oman, an' she hab long tail same like he is.

God wake Adam up, an' gib de 'oman to him for be a help in de garden, an' tell him for 'struct she in all de t'ing she is fittin' for do, like roke (rake) path, an' burn leaf, an' sich-like.

Den God tell de 'oman she is to be 'bejient to de man, an' cook he bittle, an' tek keer o' de house. God name she name, Ebe. He told her 'bout de apples too. An' den he gone 'way outn de garden.

After dat eberyt'ing git 'long fine again. Dat 'oman been a big help to Adam. She pick de burr out o' he tail. An' she mind de creeter roun' de place. An' spite o' all de she-she talk she gi' him, what wid all de work she done for help him, an' de good bittle she cook him, Adam git jus' as fat an' sassy as a barrow-shoat jus' before hog-killin'!

VII

One day, though, Ebe been a-rokin' leaf an' burnin' trash down by dat apple tree. She been look good at dem apple, 'cause dey mos' ripe, an' dey int'res' she special dat day. Jus' as she quit look at 'em, an' turn roun' to de work, who gone by but de Sarpint. He stop to pass de time o' day, an' Ebe is jis' as satisfy to talk as he is, 'cause de fus' 'oman been jis' like de res', she too lub to

chew de rag. Compersation is de meat o' de fremale!

"How you do, Miss Ebe?" de Sarpint say, "You lookin' mighty pretty today. I declare you look jis' as sweet as one o' dem apple 'pon-top o' de tree!"

"Go 'long, creeter, wid all dat palaverin'! Enty you know I is a married lady, eh?" Ebe answer him. But jis' de same she aint sound like she is too bex, an' she cut she eye roun' for see how sweet dem apple look.

"Sho', ma'am! Sho'! Nobody know dat better dan me, but when you look so nice I swear I jis' can't resist tellin' you 'bout it. You mus' be is nyam a whole lot o' dem same apple for git so smart an' look so good. Eatin' dem is what dey say is mek God so smart. An' youself is mighty smart, too."

"Mind, now! You bes' git 'way from here 'fore Adam come here, an' ketch you mekin' all dem compliment, an' breck you' back. You is a bol' creeter for talk like dat 'bout God, too. You know he aint 'low nobody for nyam dem apple ceptin' he own self! You mek me too bex wid you!"

Jis' de same, she aint look dat way. She jus' kind o' giggle, an' cast she eye down.

"Sho' 'nough! Enty you eat some o' dem apple when nobody aint know?"

She sort o' stick out she mout', an' look sad. "I aint ebber so much as tas'e dem."

"How come, Sister? Mebbe you aint want to?"

"Enty God tell we 'sponsible for let dem 'lone?"

"Tchuh! What nobody don't know don't hurt dem! How he goin' to find out if one is gone, wid so much lef' on de tree?"

Well, eberybody know, 'oman is a *sometime t'ing.* Turreckly Ebe tek one o' dem apple off de tree, an' bit a big piece out o' it, an' swaller it down widout hardly know what she been doin'.

When de Sarpint seen she do dat he gone 'way. He know he done play de Debbil, an' he is fixed it to make dat no-'count 'oman git dat po' man in a heap o' trouble.

An' dat is de fus' t'ing she had to gone an' do. She dat scared bein' in dat fix by she-self dat she can't ketch Adam fas' enough to git him in too. She fool him, an' plague him, an' 'tice him, till at las' he eat de turrah res' o' dat apple. An' she mek him say tis bery good, too!

VIII

Den dey is both in de fix, for-true for-true! 'Cause Adam aint hardly eat de las' bit o' dat apple befo' dem yeddy de garden gate slam, an' dey know God come in de garden for walk 'bout, an' see how eberyt'ing stan', an' pledjur heself.

Dem git 'way from dat apple tree, an' dey aint stop till dey git 'way ober in a corner o' de place, where dey is a hebby fig-tree, all kibber up wid t'ick leaf. Adam seen dey kin hide good in dat, an' dey crawl in

under it, an' squinch dey-self up side by each, an' pull a lot o' dead leaf ober dem for kibber dem up. Dey reckin God won't see dem, an' dem try for be quiet as dey kin.

Now jus' as luck turn, God habs for walk right to dat apple tree fus' t'ing, for look at he apple. He mout' pure water when he t'ink 'bout how nice dey goin' tas'e when dey is good an' ripe, an' he kin eat 'em. When he git to de tree he notice where Ebe been an' burn leaf, an' work 'bout.

Den he count he apple. Dey been one gone! He count 'em again. Sho' 'nough, dey *is* one gone.

He t'ink he will call Adam an' squestion him 'bout de t'ing. So he lif' up dat big voice o' he-own, an' shout out: "Adam! Oh, Adam!"

But Adam so scared he aint say nothin'!

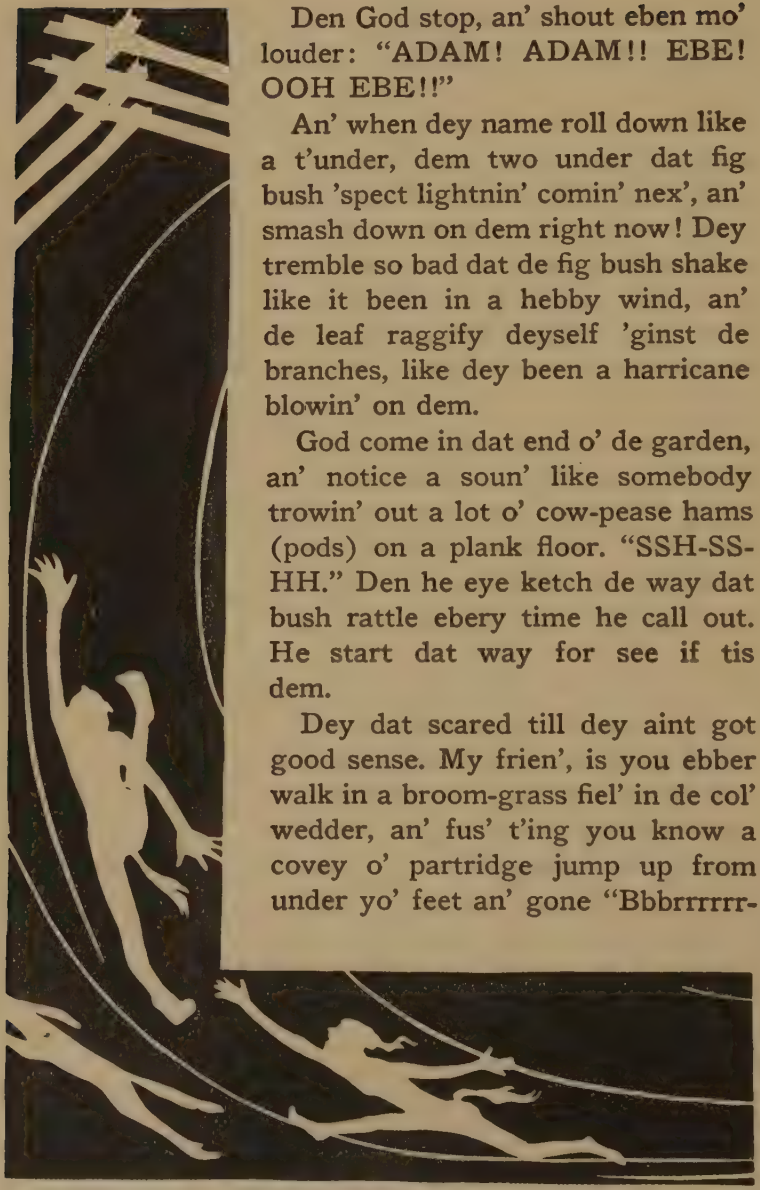
Den God holler, "Ebe! Oh, Ebe!"

An' Ebe aint say nothin' needer, but dey can't keep from tremble.

God holler out eben louder: "Adam! Ooh Adam!" An' he voice mek mo' noise dan a t'ousand o' bull yearlin's in de springtime.

Dem two in de fig bush *is* dat 'fraid dey done los' dey tongue.

When God call two or t'ree time mo', an' dey don't answer, he begin to git bex for true. He start for walk 'bout de garden for find dem, an' when he aint callin' he grumble an' sort o' moan 'long, like a bull when he mad. An' nothin' what yeddy him can't keep from tremble an' hide. De rabbit crawl up in de holler tree. De cooter swink down in de mud, an' de broom-grass lie flat in de fiel'.



Den God stop, an' shout eben mo' louder: "ADAM! ADAM!! EBE! OOH EBE!!"

An' when dey name roll down like a t'under, dem two under dat fig bush 'spect lightnin' comin' nex', an' smash down on dem right now! Dey tremble so bad dat de fig bush shake like it been in a hebby wind, an' de leaf raggify deyself 'ginst de branches, like dey been a harricane blowin' on dem.

God come in dat end o' de garden, an' notice a soun' like somebody trowin' out a lot o' cow-pease hams (pods) on a plank floor. "SSH-SS-HH." Den he eye ketch de way dat bush rattle ebery time he call out. He start dat way for see if tis dem.

Dey dat scared till dey aint got good sense. My frien', is you ebber walk in a broom-grass fiel' in de col' wedder, an' fus' t'ing you know a covey o' partridge jump up from under yo' feet an' gone "Bbbrrrrrr-

rgh!" An' when dem bird gone little way, dey start for squeak an' call to one anudder? Well, suh, Adam an' Ebe git up out o' dat fig bush wid a soun' like a hun'erd flock o' partridge, "BBBBBRRRRRRRGH!" Dey can't holler to each other. Dey jus' kin squeak. But dat aint stop dem from trabble.

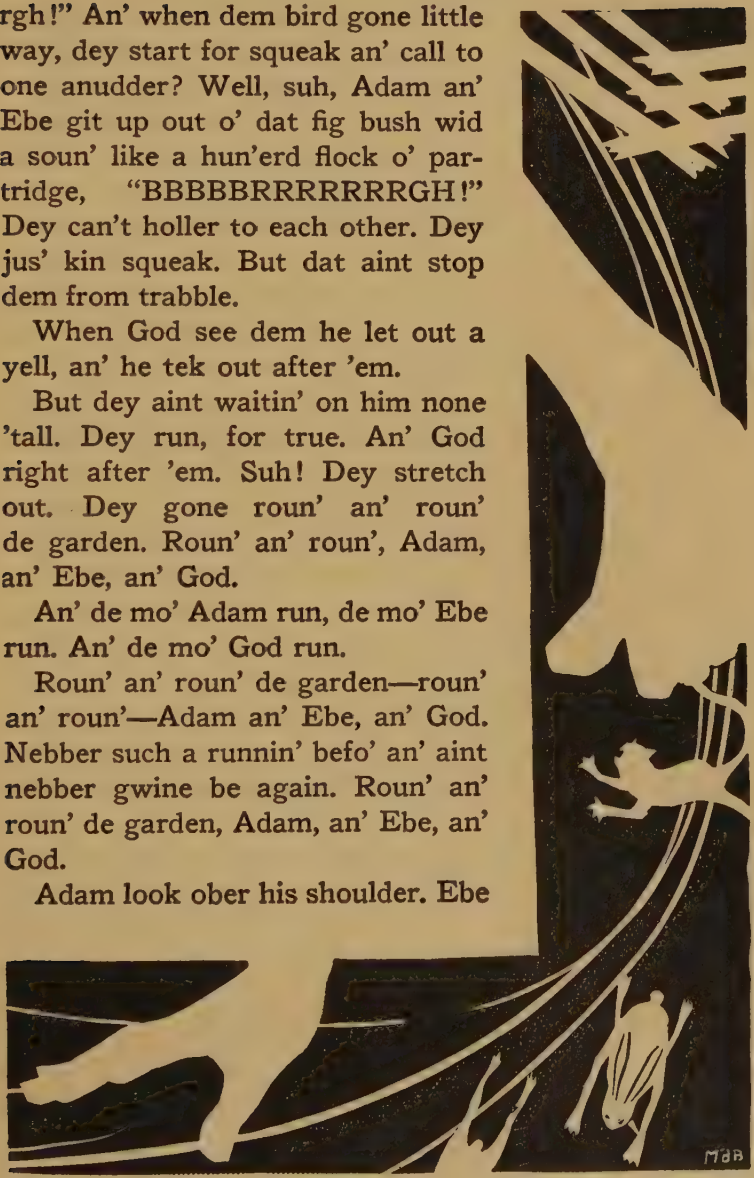
When God see dem he let out a yell, an' he tek out after 'em.

But dey aint waitin' on him none 'tall. Dey run, for true. An' God right after 'em. Suh! Dey stretch out. Dey gone roun' an' roun' de garden. Roun' an' roun', Adam, an' Ebe, an' God.

An' de mo' Adam run, de mo' Ebe run. An' de mo' God run.

Roun' an' roun' de garden—roun' an' roun'—Adam an' Ebe, an' God. Nebber such a runnin' befo' an' aint nebber gwine be again. Roun' an' roun' de garden, Adam, an' Ebe, an' God.

Adam look ober his shoulder. Ebe



right behin' him. God right behin' she. An' ebbery time he look God is mo' closer. Adam hab he foot in he hand a'ready, so dey won't git in he way when he run, but man, suh! Now he pick heself clean off de groun', an' *straighten* out! An' Ebe. An' God, right behin' 'em. Roun' an' roun' de garden, roun' an' roun'.

Look like to Adam dey can't run much mo'. Look like dey gwine git cotch! All de time dey is a-trabblin', Adam know he got to work he head as well as he foots, an' now he is figgerin' an' figgerin' hard, how dey goin' get 'way. He 'member 'bout a place where de fench sort o' bus' down, an' he t'ink if he only git there mebbe he kin git 'cross, an' git 'way.

God is mos' up on 'em, when Adam tek out for dat place. An' Ebe is right behin' him, an' God right behin' she, jus' a-trabblin', an' a-hollerin', an' a-hollerin', till it soun' like a engine on de Coast Line Railroad!

IX

Adam see dat low place an' he trabble. He git mo' closer, an' he trabble! Ebe behin' he, an' God behin' she, so close she kin feel he breat'. Den Adam gib a jump, an' lan' pon-top o' de wall. An' Ebe lan' right 'long-side o' he. Look like dem gwine git away.

God see what dey doin'. He bexed, an' he bexed for true, an' he aim to fix dem, eben if he aint ketch dem, so dey'll know better dan to ack like dat again—but de same time he aint want to done dem too much o' harm. Jus' as dey gone a slidin' ober de fench wid dey tails stickin' out behind 'em, God reach down in he belt an' pull out a little gol' hatchitch an' fling at dem—an'

he fling it so good till wid de *one* t'row it cut off *all two* o' dey tails!

He mark 'em! Same like you mark a barrow-hog—only dey an' all what rescend from dem is wuss off dan a barrow is—de hog got a little piece o' tail lef', but mens an' 'omans aint got none 'tall.

III

SIS' NANNY-GOAT

SIS' NANNY-GOAT

X Necessity maketh the animals cry for further evolution; XI and thus they came by tails. XII A parable of guile XIII and improvident generosity.

X

Taint long after dem creeter git dey mout' till dey aint hab to ax nobody nothin' 'bout how to use 'em. Dey work dey jaws so plentiful, hollerin', an' shoutin' an' talkin' dey own kind o' talk, till dey hongry. An' when Stepney (hunger) git 'em, dey hunt out all what is fitten to nyam. Once dey git de notion o' bitin' for food, den eberybody gots to watch out, lest some-t'in' nip 'em. An' de big creeter been de worst off—'cause de leetle skee-wee bug an' t'ing hab de bigges' mout' for dey size, an' kin bite, an' bite for true. When dem gnat an' horse-fly an' gallinipper start dat, dey gone to it, an' dem big creeter full up wid blood is jis' what dem debblish bug been a-lookin' for, an' dem Satans kin git way so quick dat de big creeter can't rule dem no-way. Ebber seen a blue-head fly, out de reach o' Br' Cow' tail, work stiddy till he been all swell up? Well, dem days all dem drat bug aint got nothin' to stop 'em till dey drink dey fill.

De big creeter been so attackted by fly an' all dem

kind till none o' dem can't talk 'bout nothin' else. De tame one 'scuss an' cuss 'mongst deyself, an' de wild one cuss an' rescuss 'mongst deyself too, till dey mek sich a noise dey yeddy one annurrer. An' at las' dem agree dat dey bes' hol' a big meetin' for eberybody to come to, an' confab togedder till dey work out some scheme dat'll git 'em a little peace.

An' dat's what dey done. At las' de day for de 'stracted meetin' git dere, an' all de creeter cep'n' de Sarpint come jus' a-gallopin' to de place. Br' Lion let out right away dat he goin' to preside, an' nobody aint anxious for 'spute him. An' when dey start, dere nebber been sich a goin's on! Eberybody try for tell 'bout de misery dey hab, an' which kind o' bitin' is de worst, an' all git to talkin' to once so nobody kin listen.

Den Br' Lion jis' lay down de law, an' tell 'em: "Ki! You gots to be mannersable, from now on, an', for cry-out-sake, quit tellin' 'bout how yo' eyes mos' close wid de bite, or you can't set down, an' jis' say what you done to get rid o' dem t'ing, so we kin git a notion what for do nex'."

Look like all de beas' want to recommen' a plan to once, speshly Br' Rabbit, who is always got him a notion o' some sort. But Br' Bull-Cow git de eye o' Br' Lion fus', an' Br' Cow tell 'em. "De only t'ing yoonuh kin do is to act like me; run t'rough de t'ick bushes an' scrape dem fly off yo' hide."

But Br' Hoss, he says, "Don't t'ink too much o' dat, 'cause dem bush tek so much o' hide off o' you, dem fly jis' git a better chance at yo' meat dan ebber."

Br' Rabbit try again to mek Br' Lion let him talk,

but Br' Hog git he chance right den. "Waller in de sof' mud," he exwise 'em, "an' dem debbils can't git t'rough de dirt to bite you."

"Yeah! I'd radder been bit to deat' dan look like you does after dat!" say Br' Wolf.

"I got a scheme—" Br' Rabbit begin.

But Br' Eagle, sittin' on a branch, spread he wing', an' Br' Lion pay 'tention to him, an' ain't see Br' Rabbit at all.

"Fly high in de element is de way to do," say Br' Eagle. "Dat's what I done, an' dey can't git you up dere."

"Me frien'," Br' Elephant ax him. "How is a pusson like me goin' to fly high, eeder-so low? An' how 'bout when you come down? Dem been jis' a-waitin' for you wid dey mout's popped open, mo' hongry dan before, enty?"

Br' Eagle hab to acknowledge de corn.

Dis time, befo' Br' Rabbit mek heself heard, de Sarpint raised up an' catch Br' Lion's eye. Nobody knowed when he come to de meetin', he slipped in dat easy. De fact is, he come straight from de Garden, jis' a-grinnin' ober de way God mark Adam an' Ebe. He yeddy de meetin' from far off, eberybody was yellin' dey heads off so. He nebber like to miss a fight 'cause him an' Trouble is frien's, an' he kin mos' times mek a fuss mo' better. So when he ketch Br' Lion's eye, he say, "Gemmens an' ladies, dey aint but one t'ing you all gots to hab. Tis tails."

Den Br' Dog speak up. "Don't listen to de Sarpint. He'll git you into a bad fix if you don't watch out."

Nobody aint like de Sarpint, but jus' now dey been mad at Br' Dog too, 'cause he gi' dem leetle bug sich big mout', an' dey lay de most part o' bodder to him.

"Talk it! Talk it!" some say.

"Don't listen to him," say de res'. An' 'sputin' break out all roun'.

"Lemme tell you whaffor do," begin Br' Rabbit.

"Stop all dis ruction," Br' Lion roar at dem.

"I aint come here to start no rowin'," de Sarpint say in dat nice-nasty way he got o' talkin', "an' I reckon I better gone 'way." An' he mek like he start for de woods, only he stop to say, "but I might could tol' you 'bout Adam an' Ebe."

All de creeter know already dat de Sarpint got de knack o' knowin' de news 'fore anybody else, an' dey been mos' crazy wid all de talkin' an' rowin', an' dey'd likes for yeddy 'bout somet'ing else awhile, so when de Sarpint start on again, Br' Jackass head him off, an' ax, "What dat, 'bout Adam an' Ebe?"

"Hm! God cut off dey tail for mark 'em 'count o' dey bad ways."

"What difference dat goin' to mek?" Br' Jackass squizzit him.

"Man! Enty you nebber seen Adam an' Ebe work dey tail, dat you ax me dat?"

"We seen dey tail, an' dey mek 'em look fancy, o' cose, but what is dey good for?"

Some o' de creeter ain' seem for know what tail kin do. De Sarpint try for resplain how de t'ing work, but he couldn't do nothin' much wid a lot o' dem. An' Br' Jack-Ass is de worst. He ax an' he ax, an' he can't mek out how de t'ing is, till at las' de Sarpint lost patience. An' he say to him, easy an' 'ceitful. "If you will set

yo'self right down here in front o' me for jis' a minute, I reckin I kin show you how de t'ing stan'."

An' Br' Jack-Ass aint got no better sense dan to done it. An' jis' as he set down, de Sarpint grab a-holt o' him wid he mout' at de bery end o' he backbone, an' sunk he teet' into he meat, an' swung on.

An' he needed to hold good, too, 'cause Br' Jack-Ass git up from dere right now, an' gone roun' dat meetin' jis' a-jumpin' an' a-humpin', a-gruntin', an' a-kickin', an' a-swingin' out, tryin' to git loose from de Sarpint. Dat he couldn't do, 'cause de Sarpint sho' got he teet' set, an' he so well fixed dat he kin gi' heself a swing an' lay heself across Br' Jack-Ass' rib like he been a whip, an' mek him kick all de higher.

All de creeter habs to git from under, but how dey all did laugh an' holler. "Ride him, Sarpint! Ride him!" An' turrah creeter say, "T'row him, Br' Jack-Ass! T'row him! One mo' like dat las' one, man!"

But taint till de Sarpint git tired an' turn loose dat he let Br' Jack-Ass go. An' eben now Br' Jack-Ass been so ticklish dat from dat day, taint safe ebber to gone roun' he h'anch.

When de creeter git t'rough dey yellin' an' whoopin', Br' Sarpint ketch he breat' an' tell 'em, "De same way I fasten on Br' Jack-Ass flank is de way dem t'ing call tail been fasten on Adam an' Ebe; an' de same way I t'rash Br' Jack-Ass ribs is de way dem tail kin switch to 'stroy fly."

"Dasso? Dasso?" dey all say. "But how we goin' to git tail?"

"You bes' gone an' ax God, ebery one o' you dat want 'em." De Sarpint sic 'em on a-puppose 'cause he reckin God aint goin' to like dat right now. An' wid dat he slip out de crowd an' gone 'way.

De whole gang b'liebe dat's a right good notion too, an' start for gone.

But Br' Elephant hab sense, an' work he head, an' holler, "Wait! Hol' fast! You all bes' study dis t'ing a little bit."

So dey stop for harken to what Br' Elephant hab to say.

"You know what a ruction dey been 'bout gettin' mout', enty? How you know de Sarpint ain't playin' some trick on you right now, sendin' dis here gang to bodder God?"

"Mebbe dat been de trut'," say Br' Lion.

"Bery well, den. De notion mebbe aint bad, 'cause de Sarpint do know a lot o' good t'ing, for all he debbilment, but de bes' t'ing for we to done is to send one man an' ax God perlite. If de whole gang gone he ain't goin' to gi' we nothin'."

"Mek Br' Dog can't do it?" say Br' Bull Cow. "He used to git 'long so well wid God he oughto could 'suade him 'bout de t'ing if anybody kin."

But a whole lot o' creeter beller, "No! No! Not he."

"I wouldn't gone dis time for nobody," Br' Dog answer back. "I aint had a t'ing but trouble from what I last done for you."

"Why aint you sen' me?" Br' Rabbit ax 'em. "I could

talk de t'ing good, an' me frien's want dat I should be relected."

Some o' de leetle creeter an' mos' o' de freemales nod dey head, but de big creeter wouldn't hear o' it, an' dat mek Br' Rabbit mad.

Eberybody shootin' dey mout' a-plenty, talkin' 'bout dis one, an' dat one, an' jis' what dey goin' for hab to done. If God gi' 'em tail, tis mos' likely whoeber gone got to put on de tail for 'em too. Seem like eberybody'd like de position an' de 'tority, but nobody want de work. Sides dat, dey is all skittish 'bout what God mebbe will do to de pusson what ax him.

"You all bes' sen' a man who aint 'fraid to go," Br' Rabbit tell 'em. "You bes' sen' me."

"You bes' shut yo' mout'," Br' Lion tell him. "You aint got manners enough to be 'fraid."

Den Br' Rabbit is mad for a fack, an' he work roun' all de harder wid dat slick mout' o' hisn for git relected.

De big creeter don't pay no 'tention but jus' gone on agonizin' 'bout who is to gone till it look like dey aint nebber going to recide on anybody. De one pusson dat aint open she mout' t'rough de whole meetin' been Sis' Nanny-Goat, an' she is still a-sittin' dere holdin' she peace so quiet an' mannersable dat nobody aint pay no 'tention to she till Br' Dog say all on a suddent, "Tis Sis' Nanny-Goat ought to be de one. She got a way wid she, an' she'll talk to de Maussuh right. An' if he gi' us de tail, she got a growin' han'. What she put dat han' to will tek root, an' grow good."

All de creeter cep'n Br' Rabbit seen so good dat plan would work dat dey wondered why nobody aint figger on it before. Dey turn in right den to 'suade Sis' Nanny-

Goat, till at last she say, while she don't want de job, she reckin she'll have to done it an' oblige.

Dat set Br' Rabbit on fire. He holler out, "You pass ober de man dat should done de work for you! All right! I goin' to git out o' dis t'ing altogedder. You all is too *stchupid* to git 'long widout tail, but I got sense enough to mek out jis' as I is. Good day to you!" An' mad as kin be, he gone he way.

An' de big creeter say, "De no-manners debbil. Tis a good riddance! Pay no 'tention to him Sis' Nanny-Goat. Go 'long right now. We'll be waitin' for you right here when you git back."

XI

She been gone dat long dey t'ink she mus' nebber be comin' back, but bye an' bye here she come, bery slow. She can't trabble fas' 'cause she hab a quile o' som'ting like a rope roun' she shoulder, lookin' like what dey sell to de sto' for plough-line, for drive mule wid. An' she gots a fanner (basket) wid all kind o' t'ing in it, scissors an' different kind o' needle an' thread, an' t'imble, an' t'ing for cut tail an' fasten on so dey kin grow tight into de creeter' own meat. An' sides dat dey is paint, an' bresh, an' t'ing, for fix up dem tail to match dey skin.

"Ki! God gi' us de tail, den!" shout Br' Dog.

"Sister, how you is 'suade de Maussuh?" ax Br' Lion.

"I aint 'suade him. I jis' tell him de trut', an' he look down an' he say, 'Well, de creeter sen' you for beg me?' An' I say, 'No, suh, I jis' ax you.' Den he look at me again for a minute an' he kind o' grin an' say, 'Bery well, den, Sis' Nanny-Goat. But if I gi' dem tails you

got to put 'em on dem all, an' I don't want to hear nothin' mo' about it.' I tell him, 'Yessuh.' Den he gimme dese t'ing an' 'structed me how to use 'em, an' I come back here."

"When you goin' to start workin', Sister?" dem ax she.

"Not jis' now, me frien's. But git here firs' t'ing in de mornin' an' we'll mek a soon start."

'Fore day-clean (dawn) in de mornin' o' de next day de creeter 'gin to come. Sis' Nanny-Goat look at dem comin', an' knowed she goin' hab a handful wid dat work. She would ha' like for sew on she own tail fus', for 'speriment, but she know dat dey will be too much o' compersation 'mongst dem lady creeter, an' all, if she fix she-self de fustes'. So she jus' medjur up a nice sizable tail for she-self, not too big an' not too little, an' put it in she side-pocket, for sew on after she done fix up de res' o' de creeter.

Den she git to work, an' after dat she aint los' one bit o' time wid stannin' 'bout. When de fus' creeter come, she look him ober fait'ful, as God had 'structed she, an' she eye is dat good till she aint hardly had to medjur de 'mount o' tail he goin' to tek. An' wid all de res' she jus' grab she scissors, an' cut off 'nough o' tail for fit dem nice. She t'row a t'read into one o' dem needle what God gi' she, big or leetle, 'cordin' to de toughness o' dey hide, an' 'fore dey kin scarcely say "Howdy," she been sew on de tail! An' de creeter kin

hardly mek he manners an' say "Tenky," 'fore de tail is tek root an' growed on.

She sure hab a sweet eye for choosin' dem tail. She gi' Br' Bull dat long, slick tail wid a nice tossel on de end, jus' de right size for knock wolf-fly wid. She fix Br' Hoss he long-hair tail so he can smack he haunch, an' kill a whole fambly o' green-head fly to once; an' when he been turn loose on a Sunday in de pasture he kin h'ist he tail high in de element like a flag, an' run 'bout.

She aint tek but one look at Br' Possum, an' she gib him dat bare tail what he kin wrop 'roun' an' 'roun' a tree-limb, for hol' on wid. She mek Br' Coon tail bushy, An' she grin a whole lot when she mek Br' Pig' tail, all curl-up like he laugh at heself! She lef' some tail roun', an' she flatten some out. She mek some p'int, an' some stub; but soon as she git dem sewed on, she paint 'em all. She dot de tail o' de leetle spotty toad (female dog) jus' like she coat. She speckle de hen. She fix Br' Wolf an' Br' Elephant plain. She stripe Br' Tiger an' Br' Coon. An' de sheeps she make all sort o' way, plain, an' ring-streaked, an' spotted.

Well, suh, de creeter suttinly git a lot o' pledjur out o' dey tail right from de start. Dey aint hardly git 'way from Sis' Nanny-Goat han' 'fore dey hab to start sa-shayin' 'roun', swishin' dey new tail, an' jumpin', an' skylarkin'. Den sometime you kin see dem stannin' right still, jis' waitin' for a fly for light, so dey kin cut down on dem, an' see dem fall on de groun' dead.

Sis' Nanny-Goat aint waste no time. She is work so fait'ful choppin' an' sewin' an' paintin' till late in de afternoon she see dat she aint hab too much o' creeter

lef' for put tail on. Mos'ly dey is de leetle beas' what can't walk so fas', an' hab a hard time for git dere early, so dey been way off at de end o' de line. She look ober what is lef' o' de quile (coil), an' count de creeter what is still for fix. She t'ink mebbe she been a leetle too generous wid some, but not all o' dem come. Br' Frog aint care 'bout scare off de fly an' t'ing 'cause he lib on dem. An' Br' Grummole (Ground Mole) mek he house in de earth, so he kin get 'way, an' he aint need more dan a tetch o' tail to talk about. O' cose God count on dat, an' Sis' Nanny-Goat find dat she hab jus' de right lengt' left, for suit out wid tail dem what do come.

Br' Rat an' Br' Mouse been de las' one for fix. Dey trabble togedder because dey is kin. Br' Mouse is werry polite, 'cause he been leetle an' scary. It been his turn fust.

Br' Rat push up, an' Br' Mouse say, " 'Scuse *me,* Br' Rat, I beg you' pardon, suh, but I come next."

"What you talk 'bout! Git out o' de way! Tis my turn."

"Hesh you' mout'!" Sis' Nanny-Goat tell him. "Tis Br' Mouse turn. An' anyway, if tisn't, he been manners-able, so I goin' to fix him right now."

XII

Jus' when she been a-figgerin' how for cut dat las' piece betwix' dem, she yeddy somebody come up behind she. An' he voice say bery sof' an' nice, "Howdy, Sis' Nanny-Goat. You suttinly fix a nice lot o' tail for eberybody. An' dey look good, too!"

She look roun' an' dere is Br' Rabbit. She is jis' cut down (depressed) at de sight o' him. Nobody figger

after de brazen way Br' Rabbit talk in de meetin' dat he is goin' to bodder no mo' 'bout tail. Sis' Nanny-Goat is scare dat Br' Rabbit is change he mind, but she is dat polite, an' kind-heart', dat she aint let on. All she say is, "I tanky, suh, for de fine word you gi' me."

"Sister," he say in dat twis' mout' way o' he-own, "You sho' learn good all what God teach you. Ebery-body mighty lucky for hab sich a smart pusson for do all o' dis 'sponsible work wid dem."

Sis' Nanny-Goat act like she is too busy for answer jus' den. She put de end ob a t'read in she mout', for wet it, an' den stick it through de needle, for sew on Br' Mouse tail. All de time she been a-fussin' 'bout how she goin' git rid o' Br' Rabbit if he ax she for a tail too. Only a leetle tag end o' tail been lef' now, not 'nough for share out. It is jus' right for Br' Rat, but taint near big enough for anybody as big as Br' Rabbit.

Bye an' bye she mek answer to Br' Rabbit, "Yes, suh, De Lord sholy tek a whole lot o' trouble for teach me."

"I sure wish I been here all de day for see de way you work. I goin' git here by day-clean tomorrow for watch de fun. Mus' be you aint goin' hab sich a hebby day den, you is fix so much o' creeter today."

Sis' Nanny-Goat aint know how much Br' Rabbit know, an' how much he mek out for know, an' she aint like for tell him how de t'ing stan'. But Sis' Nanny-Goat recide, if Br' Rabbit push she, for fetch out de trut'. So jus' as she finish wid de sewin' on Br' Mouse, an' reach for she scissors for cut de t'read, she say, kind o' like she been a-talkin' to sheself, "Praise be, I is goin' to be done dis task today."

"Den you mus' be mos' ready for work on me?" Br' Rabbit say, bold.

Po' Sis' Nanny-Goat aint know wha' for do. She 'member good 'bout all de ruction twix' Br' 'Gator an' Br' Dog, an' de trouble dat mek, what mebbe nebber'll git settle', an' she aint want for mek any mo' 'sturbance. She aint forgit how nasty Br' Rabbit act to de meetin', when he been cross' in he schemin'. An' she look at de las' piece o' tail she hab lef' for gi' 'way, an' she figger dat she mus' take a bold course. She 'gin sewin' de tail on Br' Rat, an' she say to Br' Rabbit, "My frien', dat time for sew tail on you aint nebber goin' git here."

"Oh, cry-out, Sis' Nanny-Goat! What you mean by dat?"

"Nobody aint count on you for hab tail, Br' Rabbit, after what you say to de meetin'. I don't see how you kin hab de busumption for come here an' ax for tail! Dey aint none for you, an' dat's de God's trut'! You might jis' as well go 'long."

Well, dat jis' start it! Br' Rabbit had notice' good dat she aint got no tail yit sheself, an' he know she mus' hab hid a piece away somewhere, an' he try for see where 'tis.

"Sis' Nanny-Goat! Is you gwine cheat me out o' me tail? We Maussuh aint nebber goin' allow dat!"

Sis' Nanny-Goat 'tend like she been deef.

"I goin' tell on you, de way you is act, Sis' Nanny-Goat." An' Br' Rabbit mek like he start right off for see God.

"Dasso!" say Sis' Nanny-Goat, like she aint care. "Mebbe you kin 'splain how you is say you don't need

tail, an' den change yo' mind! Mebbe you kin fool we all, but kin you fool God?"

When Br' Rabbit can't scare she, he start for beg an' plead. He bus' out a-cryin'. "Oh, Sis' Nanny-Goat, I can't git 'long widout tail! I'd be 'shame for show me face, let 'lone me behime end, wid no tail at all when eberybody hab one. Do gi' me some tail, Sis' Nanny-Goat, eben if jus' a leetle one!" An' all de time he pry roun' for see where she put she own piece o' tail.

Sis' Nanny-Goat git mad. "You is a no-count rascil, an' I ain't goin' put up wid none o' yo' meanness! Go 'long."

An' all de beas' what stan' roun' 'bout for see de sport bus' right out a-laughin'.

But Br' Rabbit aint budge. He cry, an' he bawl, an' he t'row heself on de groun'.

"Sis' Nanny-Goat, do, please, ma'am, I beg you. Aint you got no bowels o' compassion? Jus' t'ink o' me chillen."

Sis' Nanny-Goat suck she teet' at him, but dat 'bout de chillen been sometin' new, an' she listen. But she aint say nothin', but gone on fixin' to put 'way ebery-thing cep'n what she need for sew on she own tail wid.

"Oh, Sis' Nanny-Goat," Br' Rabbit say, "How kin you forgit dem chillen? You been so kind-heart! How dem po' li'l chillen goin' cry! How dem goin' be shame'! Dey can't gone out in de day-time, but only in de night, so dat nobody can't see where dey aint got no tail!"

XIII

Sis' Nanny-Goat kind heart start for move, but she aint say nothin'.

Br' Rabbit say, "De mo' I study 'bout dem chillen de mo' me eye-water blind me! Oh, I can't stan' it, Sis' Nanny-Goat!" An' he lie down on de groun', an' holler like a dog.

Sis' Nanny-Goat feel in she pocket for dat piece o' tail she need for sheself, but she don't bring it out. She can't spare a mite. She shut down she han' in she pocket.

Br' Rabbit is watchin' out o' one eye. An' he holler some mo', an' cry so good dat de face o' de beas' a-settin' roun' git right long.

Br' Coon, he say, "De Lord aint 'low dat Br' Rabbit can't hab no tail at all. Can't you fix him up someway, Sis' Nanny-Goat?"

Br' Lion objeck. "God, He aint say dat Sis' Nanny-Goat should gi' tail to creeter what say dey kin do widout 'em! Br' Rabbit tell we dat t'ing straight, an' he aint got a right to a Jedus-piece o' tail!"

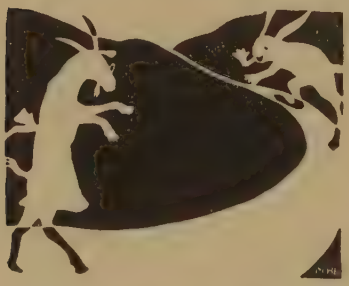
Br' Bull-Cow mek answer, "Br' Rabbit aint act right for begin wid, but now he been polite. An' dat been true, what he say 'bout he chillens."

An' Br' Rabbit jus' sob out den, "My po' chillen! My po' chillen! Not only dem what been here now, but dem what been a-comin'. Jus' t'ink, Sis' Nanny-Goat, if you is leave me like dis, dey is goin' for hab to back-back all dey life!"

Sis' Nanny-Goat can't stan' dat. She git out she own piece o' tail, an' look at it. It stan' jus' right for she. Little less, an' it would been too short by dat much. She tek up she scissors for mek de cut. Ef she tek off a inch 'taint goin' for lef' she 'nough; an' she put de scissors down again.

Den Br' Rabbit holler some mo'. Two-t'ree times she try for mek up she mind to cut off a piece, but ebery time she harden her heart, an' don't use dem shears.

At las' Br' Rabbit jus' bawl out, "Do, Sis' Nanny-Goat, t'ink what you is doin'! 'Taint as if I only hab jus' one child now, an' one child den. I jus' hab chillen steady-like, an' dey come five an' six ebery time. Oh, Sis' Nanny-Goat! T'ink o' dat great passel o' chillen, an' gran'chillen, an' double-gran', an' all dey gran', an' gran' an' double-gran'! An' nebber one le-e-etle piece o' tail 'mongst 'em all! Oh, Sis' Nanny-Goat, where is you' kind-heart?"



Sis' Nanny-Goat bus' out cryin' den. She kind-heart gi' 'way for true. She aint able for speak. She kin jus' motion Br' Rabbit for come an' git he tail sewed on. She cut she own tail in two—snip! She can't hardly see what she been doin' an' she aint got no need for stick de t'read in she mout', 'cause she eye-water wet it enough.

An' when she finish wid Br' Rabbit, an' fluff out he tail good, he say, "T'anky, Sis' Nanny-Goat, you is too ongodly kind."

An' she tell him, "You welcome! I hope yo' chillen, an' dey gran' an' dey gran', will like dey tail!" An' wid dat she pick up de piece dat she keep an' 'gin for sew it on sheself.

But Br' Rabbit aint stay for watch she. He been

a-hoppin' down de Big Road already, swingin' he ha'nch from side to side, for all de beas' to see de tail an' how he is git roun' Sis' Nanny-Goat at las'.

Den he cut he eye back at Sis' Nanny-Goat's own po' short tail. He grin till he show ebery teet' in he wicked head. He is please up to de notch. He turn, an' he wave he teenchy hank'cher, an' he holler back, "Yes, Ma'am! My gran', an' dem gran', is goin' to t'ank you for dis day. An' I sho' trus' dat you' fam'ly an' dey gran' will git a kind heart like you' own. Dey is goin' to need it, for help dem to mek out wid dat leetle nub tail dat you is got lef'!"

An' dat is how-come eberybody been a-sayin' to dis bery day, "Kind heart gi' Sis' Nanny-Goat a short tail."

IV

ABEL AN' DE GUINEA-FOWL

ABEL AN' DE GUINEA-FOWL

XIV The first family; problems of poverty and posterity. XV The diversity of Cain and Abel as revealed through the creatures, XVI the Guinea-Fowl XVII and the Cooter. XVIII Pride brought low by meek craft.

XIV

Outside dat garden, wid dey tails cut off an' away from all dey fixin's, Adam an' Ebe is mighty soon find out what'll happen to you if you aint harken to God' Woice.

From de werry minute dat fool 'oman let dat Sarpint 'tice she like dat, dey been up against Satan' own luck. He sen' it an' dey gits it.

Been so dat after de bery fus' night dey is out in de big woods, dey is so lonesome an' hongry an' all, dat 'spite ob how scared dey is o' God catchin' dem, dey gone an' try an' sneak into de garden. But when dey git back, dey seen whe' God is put a great big, tremenjous Cherubim by de gate wid a sword o' pure fire in he hand, an' dey aint got to hab nobody to tell dem dey can't sneak by dat.

Nebberdeless Adam mek out like he would act bold. He tell Ebe, "I bes' gone an' hab a word wid dat fellow 'bout lettin' we git back in."

But Ebe grab him an' whisper, "*Do* don't gone dere an' git burn up. Man! If dat Angel was to git mad an' cut down on you wid dat sword, he wouldn't lef' nothin' ob you but a cinder. Do! Come 'way now!"

An' Adam is jis' as well pleased to done dat t'ing.

So dey gone back to pick de bes' place dey kin find to scratch for a libin'.

God aint bodder wid dem for some while. He lef' dem 'lone so dem kin tas'e trouble good. Den he gone down to see how dey gittin' along.

He find whe' dey is libin', an' seen dat dey already got a little clearin' an' a bush tent in it to sleep in, an' den

he notice de two o' dem, ober to de spring renointin' dey tail-stump wid blue mud. Dey so busy dey aint seen nor heard him, but when he call out right sof', "Adam!" dey jump like somebody is shot dem full o' rock salt, an' dey would ha' gone a-runnin' if God hadn't a' call out at dem, right sewere, "Hol' you' groun' dere, an' come back here! Aint I broke you yet o' runnin'? When I call to you, you come here to me!"

So dey come back jis' a-shakin' as if dey had de ague.

God notice dey aint lookin' any too good. Dey mighty raggity an' lean an' peaked as a couple o' head o' lizzard-eatin' cats. Dey is all bit up wid fly an' t'ing, an' scratch wid briar. Aroun' dey waist dey got some kind o' contraption mek out o' fig-leaf an' grape-wine, standing sometin' like a apron.

Dey mek God a manners, pullin' dey foot an' dey forelock. An' Adam tek de word an' say, "You want to see we, suh?"

"Da's what mek I come here. Well, you is manage to mek out, enty?"

"We git 'long. But po'ly, suh! Mighty po'ly! If you could only git dat Angel for let we gone back in de garden, we wouldn't nebber git in no mo' disobejience again!"

"Don't ax dat o' me, 'cause it can't be. You had it too easy, an' you jis' git in all kind o' mischief again, if I let you back dere. Look at what you done dis last time, wid yo' smartness. Out here you goin' to habs to sweat for you' bittle, an' dat will keep you mind mo' on you' business."

"Do, suh! Please, suh, don' say dat! Let we gone back!"

"See here! If you wants to git 'long wid me, you mind you' manners, an' hoe you' row, an' don't bodder me wid all o' dat."

"Yessuh."

"Whe' is you git dem dress?"

"Ebe mek dem, suh, for refen' we 'gainst de fly. Now we tail is gone dey an' de gnat an' all is so boracious, we is bleege to hab some sort o' pertection 'gainst dem."

"You' tail stump eetch you?" God ax 'em, 'cause he notice 'em twistin' deyself around some.

"Yessuh, dem eetch a-plenty. But de blue mud ease dem, dough."

"Bery well, den. Dat show dey is healin'. Now I is goin' to sen' you a dress mek out o' skin dat will done you mo' better dan dem. From now on you bes' tek care an' done what I tell you."

"Yessuh, we sure will. Tenky for de new dress, suh."

Den God sen' dem some nice skin dress, like he promise, an' dat t'ing put heart into dem to go on fixin' up dey place to lib in, Adam a-plantin' an' Ebe a-tekin' care o' de house. But jus' as she used to was in de garden, Ebe too lub compersation, an' when Adam busy outside, an' she got to be in de house, it look like she got to hab sometin' for keep she company, an' taint too long 'fore she begin to tame a lot o' creeter an' fowl to be roun' dere wid her. Adam aint like dem too good, but he want to humor her, so he aint said too much.

After sich a length o' time dey settled down in dey new place an' git on a whole lot better eben if dey still hab a lot o' trouble an' is mighty hard up. But no mat-

ter how po' people is, dey kin always mek it a little worse for deyself. An' jus' like po' people bleege to do, Adam and Ebe habs to wheel in an' hab chillen.

First was a boy.

Dey name he name Cain, maybe 'cause he raise so much o' it when he hab colic an' t'ing. Adam aint t'ink much o' de chile at first, but when dat boy start to hab sense, an' growed a little, he git to be de bery spit o' he Pa, not only in he looks but in de way he gone 'long. He aint hardly able to walk before he start tag-gin' after he Pa in de fiel's, an' he aint no size at all befo' he git to be a confessed hoe-han', an' when dat happen tis sure a satisfaction to Adam to hab dat boy around.

Den dem hab anudder boy. Dey name he name Abel.

XV

Now if dat first boy favor he Pa, dis one sure tek after he Ma. He like to talk mos' as much as she done, an' if she like creeter, Abel lub dem. Adam git pledjur out o' habin' Cain workin' dere in de fiel' wid him, but Ebe an' dis boy kin fool roun' wid creeter, an' onrabble dey mout' to each udder de lib-long day an' be jis' as happy as if dey had good sense.

If Ebe had catch up an' tame creeter an' fowl what hang roun' de house, dis chile gots for gone out in de woods for git mo', an' trail 'em in wid corn. Between dem dey fill up de yard wid bird an' beas', an' dey fetch so much o' nyoung puppy an' leetle cat an' t'ing in de house dat Adam say, "Tek care you aint git dis house so full up wid creeter till de folks'll had to move away, to lef' dem enough room."

He aint had too much use for dem till he find out how good to eat dem nyoung pig an' t'ing is, an' how nice de fowl-egg taste. Abel and he Ma will mek a big fuss ebery time he kill a shote, but he tell 'em, "I notice dat when de meat an' graby come on de table you two relish it 'long wid you' corn bread jis' like me an' Cain."

Adam aint bodder 'bout de t'ing too much, but Cain aint stan' dat way at all. He aint got de patience he Pa hab, and he an' Abel aint nebber git long any too well.

Eben when de work hebby in de fiel' you couldn't hardly keep Abel in de corn row, he so crazy 'bout he beas'. He would cut out an' gone wid dem if you aint watch him good. Adam put a heap o' lickin' on him, 'cause he want to raise him to tek good care o' de craps, but eben so de boy would tek mo' int'res' in ridin' billy-goat, an' brokin'-in harry-dick bull calf, dan tendin' to de business dat he Pa is tryin' to teach him. Cain fuss an' fight wid Abel mos' all de time, but Adam kind o' gib up. An' one time he say to Ebe, "Dat chile Abel is a case. He aint ebber goin' to be a bit o' use, foolin' he time away wid dem creeter."

"How you kin say dat?" Ebe mek answer, 'cause she always would tek up for de boy, an' refen' him 'gainst he Pa an' he brudder. "Let dat chile 'lone. He is goin' to stock dis place good for you 'fore he is done. You aint notice yet de new creeter he fetch in de yard to tame jis' today?"

"No, an' what is more, I aint want to; 'nough is here already."

"But dis creeter been too comical. Wait an' I'll call it."

Adam mek out like he is goin', but he hang roun' till Ebe git a little corn an' t'row it on de groun', callin', "Cheek! Cheek! Chk, Chk, Chk! Cheek! Cheek! Chk, Chk, Chk!"

De fowl all come a-runnin', an' behind dem come a curious creeter for true. Twas 'bout de size ob a hen, an' anybody could tell twas some sort o' fowl, but it had a hard back like a roof, stickin' out ober de sides, an' kind o' rough an' wrinklety like a goat horn, only mo' pretty, 'cause it been mark nice wid yaller. He head is just as bushy as kin be, an' he walk so flat-foot an' look so curious, till eben Adam habs to laugh out when he git a good look at it.

XVI

De t'ing been a Guinea-fowl, 'cause dat's de way dey was mek in de first goin'-off.

Wid dat back o' hisn dat creeter sure hab a heaby adwantage ober de udder fowl, an' it aint been so long before he been de fattest an' de sassiest o' all de bird in de yard. Taint 'fraid o' nothin', 'cause if it aint big enough to fight dem, or if it look like it goin' to git a lickin', it kin pull itself back into dat back, an' swink itself up so dat dey aint 'nough lef' out to hurt. It aint eben 'fraid o' big beas'es, 'cause horse, eeder cow, could tread right 'pon-top o' it, an' don't hurt it. An' dog an' all will break dey teet' on dat shell before dey git to de creeter' meat.

'Sides dat, while dem turrah creeter is rastlin' in de dus' wid flea an' mite an' oule (lice), dis one kin tek he ease, 'cause nothin' can't git t'rough dat back for bite an' tickle him.

But whe' dat back done it de mostest good is roun' under de window, whe' Ebe used to t'row out de scraps an' de pot-scourin's. All sort o' nice hominy, an' rice, an' stuff would be dere, an' all de fowls in de yard lub dat bittle too much. De only t'ing is, ebery now an' den, hot dish water will git t'rowed out too. Once in so often one o' dem fowl git burnt good, if dey don't look out.

Guinea-fowl look like he is jis' made to lib under de window. He kin set heself down an' nyam he belly full wheneber he tek de notion. De udder fowl can't keep dey mind on eatin' for dodgin', ebery time dey t'ink hot water is a-comin', but de Guinea-fowl aint got to dodge at all. He pull in he foots an' he head under dat shell an' de water will pour 'pon top o' him, an' run right off an' done him no harm at all. He git so fat he could hardly walk 'bout de yard, an' de fatter he got de sassier he was.

He waddle about so swonger he aggrawated de turrah creeter too much, but he is so funny lookin' dat Adam was bleege to laugh when he seen him, an' dat please Ebe. An' Abel set a lot o' store by Guinea-fowl. He sho lub dat creeter particular.

Only Cain aint liked him at all. He say, "Dat t'ing is too ugly an' no-manners to lib. If I had my way wid it I would wring its fat neck." Cain was layin' for it all de time. But de res' o' de family tek up for de bird an' won't let him done it a harm.

XVII

One day Cain been in de woods, an' he found a creeter dat was eben more curious-lookin' dan de

Guinea-fowl. He ketched it up, an' fetched it to de yard, an' gib it to Abel.

"Now, boy," Cain told him, jis' a-grinnin', "Here is a right handsome beas' for you, dat will do you a whole lot more credick dan dat Guinea-fowl. An' don't ax me what good it is, 'cause I don't know."

"Who ax you? You dat eegnorant 'bout dem nobody wid de right senses goin' ax you any squestion 'bout 'em! Gimme de t'ing. It might turn out de bes' ob all. You jis' wait an' see!"

"Wait yo'self," Cain tell him back. "An' watch yo'-self. An' mebbe, fool as you is, dat creeter might learn you a little sense. Anyhow, de ornery t'ing is got a weecked eye, an' I wouldn't cry a bit if it would use dat weeckedness on some o' dis parcel o' no-'count creeters you got roun' dis yard."

Abel tek it out by de barn an' turn it loose. De t'ing aint please him, but he so like creeter dat he could put up wid dem eben when dey was as ugly as dis one. An' dey weren't no mistake 'bout dat. De t'ing dat ugly till it look like it was shamed to show itself aroun'. It aint got no more hair on it dan a egg. It hab a leetle skinny head, like a sarpint, only it aint a sarpint, 'cause it is too full in de body an' squatty for dat. An' besides, it got four foots wid claws on dem, an' a leetle stumpitty sharp-p'int tail. An' it seem like its naked hide is dat t'in an' sof' till de creeter is scared to go 'bout de open yard,

for fear somebody'll do it a hurt, or squash on it. It kind o' hang roun' by de fench all de time.

All de same dat snaky head got a mighty sharp pair o' leetle yaller eye in it. An' de t'ing is so mighty keen an' noticin' dat before long it begin to have a werry good understandin' how t'ings been in de yard.

Dat creeter, different as it is from de way it stan' now, was de cooter (Turtle).

Br' Cooter bery soon notice Br' Guinea-fowl an' he back. He seen how fat an' how fine he is, an' he study de good dat de back done him, an' figger dat if it help Br' Guinea-fowl so much it might could serb heself all de mo' better. He projick roun' to see if he couldn't beg or borrow de back to try it, but he been scared to ask right out for it. Den one time he yeddy Br' Rooster talkin' to Br' Guinea-fowl.

Br' Guinea-fowl been restin' heself in de sun-hot.

"Do, Br' Guinea-fowl," Br' Rooster beg him, "Lend me dat back o' you'n for a leetle while? You done got you' belly full o' scrap for dis day an' here me is, still hongry as can be."

"What you want wid it?" Guinea-fowl answer him, kind o' sassy, an' he stretch he leg out an' look at it.

"I jis' want to gone under de window an' git me a plenty o' dem hominy an' rice de one time."

"Mek you aint gone dere de way you is, den, an' nyam a lots o' dem?"

"Yes! I can't stan' still long enough to git a mout'-ful, I so scared o' de hot water, but wid dat back I wouldn't be 'fraid o' nothin'!"

But Br' Guinea-fowl is too cubbitch (miserly) to lend

it to anybody. He shake dat bushy head, an' say, "If I let you hab it, eben when I aint hab need for it me ownself, de whole yard is goin' to be 'pon-top o' me de enjurin' time for git a loan o' it." Den he shake heself, an' shet he eye, an' mek out like he goin' to sleep.

Br' Rooster beg an' Br' Rooster argue, but taint a bit o' use. Br' Guinea-fowl 'tend like he aint so much as yeddy him. He mek out like he is a-sleepin' hard an' drawin' he breat' strong. An' Br' Cooter find out he does dat same way wid all de rest o' de creeter what talk to him 'bout de back.

Dem words set Br' Cooter to t'inkin' 'bout how good dem scrap under de window must be. He aint hardly bol' enough to go out in de middle o' de yard for git corn wid de fowl, he so 'fraid o' gittin' stepped on, let 'lone goin' under de window, but now he heard 'bout de grits an' de rice he so crazy for tas'e dem till de water run out o' he mout'. He knowed well he would most perish if dat hot water was to git on him, an' he sure would like to borrow dat back.

He seen it wouldn't done him a piece o' good jis' to ax Br' Guinea-fowl right out for it, an' he study he head 'bout how he might git it. He notice dat creeter is mighty polite to de Guinea-fowl when dey want he back, but de rest ob de time dey aint pay him no 'tention at all.

Br' Cooter start in right den an' begin to mek up to Br' Guinea-fowl. Eben if he is so ugly, when he want to use it he got a mighty mealy mout' wid people, an' ebery time he git a chance, he try it on Br' Guinea-fowl. He eben call him "Maussuh," an' he pay him a heap o' compliment on how fine dat bushy head look,

an' how nice dat back stan', wid de yaller marks on it. When de Guinea-fowl is fill heself up wid scrap under de window an' gone in de corner o' de yard in de quiet, for catch a little sleep, de Cooter would follow him, an' set heself down to talk. An' while de Guinea-fowl aint got too much o' use for him in de first goin' off, Cooter's mout' is so full o' compliment, an' Cooter is so polite till he bleege to listen to him. 'Sides dat, Cooter is so ugly till de Guinea-fowl knowed right well heself would look all de more handsome for bein' next to him.

It git so Br' Guinea-fowl would search out de Cooter for hab compersation wid him.

Now all dat time de Guinea is gittin' fatter and fatter. He git so till de pure fat start to bulge from under dat shell, an' de t'ing fit him mo' closer dan one o' dose wasp-wais' corset 'oman used to wear. It fit him so close till at last it got to irkin' him.

Br' Cooter notice dat, an' it suit him fine. He watch how Br' Guinea-fowl hab for twis' an' turn to rest heself in dat shell, an' he aint said nothin', he jis' bided his time.

Den dere come a mighty hot spell an' it start to punish Br' Guinea-fowl. He try for sleep, but de back hol' him too tight for let him res' easy.

Br' Cooter seen how he is goin' on, an' he say to him, "What's de matter, Br' Guinea-fowl? Look like you is kind o' onrestless."

"For true, Bubbuh. An' I aint know how I kin ease meself."

"Look like you might could git on better if you could 'tretch out easy for a little bit."

"I would be mighty glad to do dat, Br' Cooter."

An' Br' Guinea-fowl try to. He had to sigh an' groan an' grunt, de back hold him so tight. Br' Cooter 'tretch he ownself good an' yawn jis' to show how easy he is.

"Den if you was to lie ober on you' side some o' de time," (Br' Cooter roll ober on he side) "or else git you spine in de dus' an' rub it good," (Br' Cooter done jis' like he say, an' he shut he eye, an' grunt, de t'ing pledjur him so). "Bubbuh, dat t'ing would done you a whole world o' good."

Br' Guinea-fowl try to git ober, but long as he got dat back on him he can't lie down, 'ceptin' on he belly. At last he gib up, an' say, "Man, I would too like to done dat, but I don't reckin I kin."

"Why you can't? Anybody smart as you is, Br' Guinea-fowl, ought to be able to done jus' what dey please."

"Tis me back bodder me."

"What! Dat good-lookin' t'ing trouble you?"

"It sure do. It fit me dat close till I can't rest for it."

"You can't tek de t'ing off, suh?"

"I is 'fraid to done dat. Somebody might take a notion to steal it, should I drap asleep."

"Dat sho' is a pity, Br' Guinea-fowl, 'cause I know too good how nice a body kin sleep when dey skin is loose."

Br' Guinea-fowl study de t'ing awhile. He would ha' like to ask Br' Cooter to tek care o' de back, but he so mean an' cubbitch till he aint trus' anybody.

'Fore de hot spell been done he feel like he is got to done somet'ing to relieve heself. Br' Cooter is most de only frien' he hab, an', when wuss come to wuss, he reckin he kin try him, de one time.

So, when dey is talkin' togedder one attanoon, Br' Guinea-fowl up an' ax Br' Cooter, "You couldn't res' here awhile an' tek care o' me back for me while I ketch a bit o' sleep?"

"Do, Br' Guinea-fowl, I'd be too scared to try to tek care o' you' property. Sposin' somet'ing was to happen to it?"

But Br' Guinea-fowl look like he bleege to git out o' de back by dis time.

"Aint nothin' for you to be 'fraid of. All you gots to do is to wake me up if anybody try for trouble it."

"Dat's de bery t'ing dat bodder me. I is too scared dat I might drap to sleep myself, an' somebody gone wid de t'ing 'fore I wake up."

"You wouldn't done dat, you is too sharp!"

"I don't know 'bout it, Br' Guinea-fowl. But I hab a notion. Maybe if I could git inside dat back, I could proteck it more better. 'Cause den nobody couldn't bodder wid it widout I knowed it."

Br' Guinea-fowl looked at Br' Cooter real hard. But Br' Cooter look so deestent, an' he ack so obligin', till Br' Guinea-fowl couldn't t'ink dat he would try for fool him. He reckin, too, dat Br' Cooter must be honest if he hol' out so long, but he aint study much, mostly 'cause he want he ease too bad. "Tek de back, Br' Cooter, an' tek care o' it de best way you kin. I is jis' compel' to git a res'."

Br' Cooter shake he head, an' sort of draw 'way whilst Br' Guinea-fowl is gittin' out o' he back. Den he feel roun' about in it till he foun' he way, an' he push up into it heself.

Br' Guinea-fowl watch him, den he let out he breat'

good, he is so comfortable. An' he say, "Dat's all right now, de t'ing fit you too good for anybody to sneak it away from you an' if you need any help you kin wake me up. But don't done it lessn you got to." An' he 'tretch heself out fine on he side, an' den roll ober like a plough mule. He tek a good wiggle in de dus', he sigh, an' taint no time befo' he was snorin' away good, jis' as happy as if he git to Hebben.

Br' Cooter shake heself roun' an' settle heself into de back. De t'ing fit him nice. He lif' heself up on he legs. De t'ing is hebby, but he kin tote it. He tried pullin' in he head an' he feets, an' dey fit like de back been mek for him. He cut he leetle yaller eye roun' at Br' Guinea-fowl. He is sleepin' hard, dat satisfied to be out o' de back dat he is snorin' till he shake all ober he carcass.

Br' Cooter look roun' to de window, he git up on he feet, an' he walk a step or two dat away. Den he look back. Br' Guinea-fowl is sleepin' jis' as sound as ebber.

He start for de window goin' easy. Nobody aint notice him, least ob all Br' Guinea-fowl. Eberybody is out in de corners o' de yard, sleepin' in de afternoon sun. He mek he way to de window, an' he hunt roun' for grits an' t'ing. Jis' as he git dere, down come a pot o' hot rinsin's, right on top o' him, but he yeddy it comin' jus' in time, an' de back perteck him fine. He nyam dem scrap for sowl! (To repletion). Dey done him a heap o' good. Dat back sure is de t'ing in dis worl' dat he needs de more-est.

He cast he eye ober at Br' Guinea-fowl.

Br' Guinea-fowl sleepin' hebby an' easy.

Br' Cooter crawl under de house, like he gettin' out o' de sun.

He cut he head roun'. Br' Guinea-fowl aint move.

Br' Cooter skeedaddle for de woods.

XVIII

Taint till de sun is so far down dat it t'rowed a hebby shadow across de yard to where he is sleepin' dat Br' Guinea-fowl commence to stir an' wake up. He 'tretch an' wake heself a little bit, den he 'member 'bout de back. He git so much o' satisfaction out o' restin' easy dat he wouldn't open he eye for awhile yet. He rub he bare skin in de dus' an' grunt wid de pure pledjur; den he open he eye for look 'bout. Br' Cooter aint dere. Mebbe Br' Cooter gone under de window. Br' Guinea-fowl look but he aint seen him. Den he git up an' gone dere heself. But no Cooter aint dere.

He meet up wid Br' Rooster an' ax him, "You aint seen Br' Cooter roun' here, is you?"

Br' Rooster aint answer him. He look at him jus' a minute, an' den he laugh fit to kill heself. "How! What's de matter wid you? Whe' you' back is?"

"Man, I aint got time for jokin'! Tell me if you is seen Br' Cooter."

But Br' Rooster couldn't contain heself. Br' Guinea-fowl look curious enough. "What's de matter? He gone wid you back, is he?"

"No, he aint gone wid it. I jis' len' it to him for a little bit, an' I reckin he is tekin' a walk."

But Br' Rooster wouldn't believe him, an' he jus' a-chucklin'. Br' Guinea-fowl gone off de udder way, mad.

Br' Guinea-fowl search de yard an' squizzit de people, an' dem what would pay 'nough attention to him to stop laughin' at de way he looked, an' listen to what he had to say, couldn't tell him a t'ing 'bout Br' Cooter.

In no time at all de whole yard got de story. All o' dem come, a-flockin', to see how Br' Guinea-fowl stan' widout he back. All dem fowl an' t'ing, dat he wouldn't lend it to, laugh him to scorn now, for true! Dem mock at him when he ax dem squestion, an' mek answer, "Why you aint lend de back to deestent creeter like us, when us ax you? Den you would ha' had it again."

Den Br' Guinea-fowl try to run 'way from dem, an' all de time kep' on a-lookin', an' a-lookin'.

Night come, an' no sign o' Br' Cooter. An' Br' Guinea-fowl sleep mighty cold widout he back. Fust day, soon as he kin see to do it, he start lookin' for de Cooter again. He hunt, an' he hunt, but he aint find a trace.

Ain' nobody seen Cooter goin' but Cain. An' he ain' say nothin' for long time. But when he ketch sight o' Br' Guinea-fowl, he is happy till he is fool. He call to Abel, "Look here, boy, an' see what my smart creeter done to your biggity one! He tief de Guinea-fowl back, an' gone wid it. I find out now what dat Cooter is good for! Tis to teach dat Guinea-fowl sense."

Abel been bex till he mos' cry. He set heself to find de Cooter, but de creeter gone too good.

All dat mornin' Br' Guinea-fowl search. Den he git hungry. He been used to high libin', an' de dry corn an' stuff he kin pick up aint satisfied him none 'tall. He gone dere by de window to see if he could find a bite

o' grits or rice. But he 'member now he got no back to pertect him, an' he is timperish. He stop, an' he hesitate. He look good. Dere is a nice lot o' grits right dere to de edge. He turn away, but Stepney pinch him, an' he ease in towards it. He been jis' 'bout to pick at it, when down come a big splash o' bi'lin' hot water, an' 'fore he could git dat fat carcass o' he-own out o' de way, de water catch him on dat bushy head an' scald de fedders spang offn it.

Br' Guinea-fowl run roun' dat yard, an' he holler, he run an' he holler. De udder creeters start to laugh, an' cry out. An' when de people in de house hear de racket dey run out to see what is goin' on.

Br' Guinea-fowl is up on his toes, an' he is a-runnin' for true, for true. He aint walkin' flat-foot an' easy no longer. He head is all blue, an' white, an' red wid de scaldin', an' he look plumb tarrified.

Cain jus' beller an' laugh at Abel an' he pet. "Didn't I tell you to watch dat Cooter an' he would learn you a somet'ing? Great Master, I is jus' too glad Cooter had to pick on dat drat Guinea-fowl."

Abel feel so bad, an' so bex, he jus' busted out cryin' an' yellin'. An' Ebe reached for Cain to gib him a box on de jaws, an' mek him mind his manners. But Cain been too quick. He duck 'way from he Ma. Jis' den de Guinea-fowl screech, an' screech some mo', an' Cain lie down an' roll on de groun'.

When Adam tell him to git up, Cain kin jis' choke out, for laughin', "Listen, Pa! He is callin' de Cooter. Listen to what he's a-sayin'."

An' when dem listen an' look, dey see de Guinea-

fowl up on he toes, runnin' roun' de yard an' jerkin' he bald head 'bout, an' jis' a-squallin', "Come back! Fetch me back! Fetch me back! Come back! Come back!"

An' he is still a-callin' an' a-squallin jis' dat way.

V

WHAT MEK BR' WASP SO SHORT-PATIENCE

WHAT MEK BR' WASP SO SHORT-PATIENCE

XIX Br' Wasp's Sin of uncharitableness XX and its punishment by devolution.

XIX

De creeter aint all stay jis' de way God mek 'em. No, suh. What wid mistake dey mek, an' accidents, an' natchal debbilment, an' one t'ing or annurrer, dey gits different as de time gone on, till sometimes dey aint hardly de same t'ing at all.

One time Br' Was' been bery different from de way he stan' now. He been a big man for company, an' he sho' love for talk, an' joke, an' cut fool. He is one pusson dat mus' hab he laugh.

One day he been a-walk de path, an' he meet up wid Br' Skeeter. Now Br' Skeeter an' he whole fambly aint no size at all, but dey tek deyself mighty serious. He an' he Pa plant a leetle patch o' groun' togedder, but dem always call it dey *plantation*. Dey talk so big 'bout dem crop, an' lan', an' t'ing, you'd mos' t'ink dem hab a twenty-mule place, an' Br' Was' too lub to draw him out.

Dat same week dey been a hebby frost, an' all de sweet-'tater-wine been dead an' black, an' eberybody dig 'tater. An' Br' Was', after he pass de time o' day wid Br' Skeeter, an' 'quire 'bout he fambly, ax him how he Pa an' heself mek out wid dey crap.

"We mek out fine, Br' Was'," Br' Skeeter say; "Jus' too fine. Hab de hebbiest crop ebber been seen!"

"De 'tater been large, den?"

"Man, Suh! Dey is gran'! You is nebber seen such 'tater!"

"How big dey is, Br' Skeeter?" Br' Was' quizzit him.

"My frien'," Br' Skeeter say, bery 'portant-like, an' he reach down an' pull he leetle breeches tight roun' he leetle leg, "De bes' part o' my Pa-an'-me crop is bigger dan de more-est part o' my leg!"

Well, suh! Br' Was' look at Br' Skeeter' po' leetle leg, an' he t'ink 'bout dem "gran' 'tater," an' he try for mind he manners. But he ches' an' face swell up, an' he eye-water run out he eye, an' he bus' out laughin' right in Br' Skeeter' face. He laugh, an' he laugh, till he side hurt him. Wheneber he commence for stop, he look at dat ridic'lous leg, what stan' so like a toot'pick, an' he laugh wuss dan ebber. He side hurt him so bad he hold 'em in wid all-two he han's, an' rock heself to an' fro, an' push 'em hard.

"What mek you habs to do like dat?" Br' Skeeter ax him. "You bes' resplain yo'self. Dat is, if yo' *kin* act sensible!"

Br' Was' kin jus' gasp out, "Great Master! Br' Skeeter, lookin' for de more-est part o' yo' leg been like huntin' de hebbiest part ob a hair! How big dem gran' 'tater mus' be, if you say dey is as big as dat!" An' he laugh again till he sides hurt so bad dat taint 'nough jus' for press 'em—he habs for grab 'em in he two han', an' squeeze.

Br' Skeeter dat bex dat he would ha' like to fight Br' Was' on de spot, but he 'member dat Br' Was' kin act mighty nasty when he git in a row. So he jus' draw heself up, an' stick out he mout', an' he say, "Laugh, you

no-manners debbil! Laugh! But tek care dat de day don't come when somebody laugh at you de same no-mannersable way you been a-laugh at me!" An' he gone 'way so rarin' mad dat he two leetle coatstail stick straight out behin' him.

XX

But dat aint stop Br' Was'. All de way to he house he been a-laugh so dat he habs to stop now an' again for squeeze he side an' ketch he breat'. At las' he git home, an' he start for laugh some mo' an' tell he fambly 'bout Br' Skeeter.

Jus' den he wife git a good look at him, an' she holler out: "For cry-out-sake, Br' Was'! What ail yo' stomach!"

Br' Was' look down where he wais' been, an' he kin hardly see it.

He los' all dat notion o' laugh right den. He look again, an' he see what all dat shakin', an' pushin', an' squeezin' done to him. He is mos' in two! Eben he leetle han' kin nigh meet roun' he middle. He t'ink how big

he wais' been, an' see how bad he swink (shrink) up, an' he 'fraid for so much as sneeze!

Den he 'member what Br' Skeeter say to him. He 'member all dem people he is been joke 'bout an' laugh at dis long time. An' he study 'bout how dem is goin' to hab dey turn for laugh at dat leetle wais' he had now. Git so dat t'ing aint nebber lef' he mind. An' dat's how-come he is so short-patience! Eberywhere he go. he t'ink somebody ready for laugh at him. Anybody so much as look at him an' he git so bex dat he been ready for fight. An' dat aint de worst; for from dat day to dis he can't laugh no mo' heself, 'cause, if he do, he goin' bus' spang in two!

VI

WHY BR' GATOR'S HIDE IS SO HORNY

WHY BR' GATOR'S HIDE IS SO HORNY

XXI Stupid curiosity XXII and folly XXIII fall before wiliness. XXIV The abstract made concrete.

XXI

One time Br' Alligator's back used to be smooth an' white as a catfish-skin, so dat when he come out o' de water, an' lie down for sleep in de sun-hot on de mud-bank, he shine like a piece o' silber. He been mighty proud o' he hide, an' mighty pleased wid heself nohow.

He an' he wife an' he fambly lib down in de ribber at de edge o' de rice fiel'. Dem hab plenty o' fish to nyam for dem bittle, an' nebber bodder wid none o' de creeter what been on de lan', lessn dem bog in de mud by de ribber-side, or fall in de water. Dem projeck roun' down in de bottom o' de ditch an' canal, an' eben if dey aint so smart, dem mek out alright. An' ebery year God sen', dey hab a gang o' chillen, so dey house is full-up widout axin' in no company. An' de whole kit an' bilin' been dat satisfy wid deyself dat dey t'ink dey ain' nobody quite like 'em. An' dey aint hab no notion how true dat is!

Well, suh, one hot day in de fall Br' Gator been res' heself 'pon-top de rice-fiel' bank, a-lettin' de sun soak into dat bright back o' hisn, when along come Br' Rabbit.

Now Br' Rabbit ain' got a bit o' use for Br' Gator, but he stop all de same for pass de time o' day an' hab a little compersation wid him, 'cause Br' Rabbit too lub

compersation! Rather dan keep he mout' shut he will eben gone out o' he way for talk, if tis only wid one o' dem ridic'lous creeter dat ain' know no better dan to lib in de water.

"Howdy, Br' Alligator. How is Sis' Alligator, an' all de nyoung Alligator mekin' out?"

Br' Gator aint bodder to speak to Br' Rabbit at de fus' goin' off. Seem like he ain' care what no other creeter t'ink 'bout him, nor how dey git 'long dey-self. But after while he fix he cat-eye on Br' Rabbit, an' tell-him-say, "Please Gawd, I like you to know dat dey gits on fine! But taint no wonder dat dem chillen is smart, an' purty, an' raise' right, 'cause dey lib in de ribber. I swear-to-Gawd I can't see how oonuh (you) mek out, a-libin' up 'pon-top o' dat dry, drafty lan'. An' you, an' all de udder creeter dat ain' fitten to lib in de water, seems to spen' all o' you' time a-skirmish-in' roun', till you mus' be wore out 'fore de day is half done!"

Br' Rabbit is bex wid Br' Gator for bein' so set in he notions, till he had a-mind to tell him what he t'ink o' dat kind o' talk, but he been jis' *so* bex dat he lay low, an' 'tend like Br' Gator's is speakin' de truth. He sigh an' he shake he head, an' say bery mou'nful-like, "Mebbe so. We sho' is been seein' a heap o' trouble!"

"Who dat, you talk 'bout, Br' Rabbit—Trouble?"

Br' Rabbit s'pose dat Br' Gator mus' be jokin' him, 'cause he 'member too good 'bout dat trouble Br' Gator had wid Br' Dog. "How, Br' Alligator! You aint nebber hear o' Trouble?"

Br' Gator shake he head. "No. I nebber yeddy 'bout him, needer seen him. How he is stan'?"

Br' Rabbit ain' b'liebe he ears. "Oh, cry out, Br' Alligator! Old as you is, an' ain' nebber seed Trouble yit?"

"I tell you, Br' Rabbit, I ain' nebber know nothin' 'bout dis here Trouble. How is Trouble look?"

Br' Rabbit scratch he head. He figger if Br' Gator been so stupid, an' so satisfy wid heself an' he own t'ing, an' so ridic'lous an' onmannersable 'bout all dat lib on de lan', dat now here is he chance for learn Br' Gator he right place. An' Br' Rabbit is so mischiebous dat he scheme 'bout how he goin' to hab de mos' fun out o' Br' Gator.

"I dunno dat I kin 'xackly tell you how Trouble stan'. But mebbe you'd like for see him?"

"Sho' 'nough, Br' Rabbit, I like bery much for see him."

"O' cose I *kin* show him to you, Br' Alligator, but I dunno dat I is a-goin' to. Mebbe you aint like him so good."

"Go 'long, boy! I ain' scare' o' dat. I jis' want to see him. If I don' like him, dat ain' goin' to be no matter to me."

"I is purty busy jis' now," Br' Rabbit 'tend.

"Do, Br' Rabbit! You gots time for a lot o' no-count t'ing, an' after all, tis *Me* what ax you—don't forgit dat!"

"Sho! O' cose. How kin I forgit dat!" Br' Rabbit mock him, only Br' Gator ain' nebber see dat Br' Rabbit mean mischief. "But I gots to fix me house, an' Sis' Rabbit is po'ly, an' de chillen gotta be 'tend to, an'——"

"Tchk! All dat'll tek care o' itself!" An' Br' Alligator

'suade an' beg, an' beg an' 'suade, till at las' Br' Rabbit 'gree to show him Trouble.

"Meet me in dis same place soon as de jew dry up offn de grass nex' Saturday. Dat been a good day. Trouble mebbe hab some time off come Sunday." An' Br' Rabbit bid him good mawnin', an' gone 'long.

XXII

Come Saturday, Br' Gator git up befo' day-clean in de mornin', an' start for fix heself.

Sis' Alligator wake up, an' ax, "Whe' you gwine?"

Br' Gator aint crack he teet' at she, but gone 'long fixin' heself.

Dat jis' set Sis' Alligator for bodder him. "Whe' is you gwine?" she ax again. An' she squestion an' she squestion, till after sich a lengt' o' time Br' Gator see dat de 'oman is jis' boun' for know.

He gi' up at las'. "I is goin' out wid Br' Rabbit."

"Whe' is you goin' to?"

Br' Alligator mek a long mout', an' try for pay no mo' 'tention.

But Sis' Alligator know de ways for git roun' dat fellah! An' after such anudder length o' time, Br' Alligator tell she: "I is goin' for see Trouble."

"What Trouble is?"

"How I know? Dat's what I goin' for see."

"Kin I go 'long?" ax Sis' Alligator.

He say no, but after talk an' 'suade, an' talk an' 'suade, at las' Br' Alligator say, short-patience-like, "All right, you kin come 'long."

So she start for fix sheself. What wid all de talkin'

an' goin' on, all de leetle alligators wake up by dis time. Dem look at dey pappy, an' dey mammy, fixin' deyself an' gittin' ready to gone out, an' dem run to Br' Gator an' ax him, "Whe' you gwine, Pappy?"

"None o' yo' business!"

Dem run den to Sis' Alligator, an' all cry out, one after anudder, "How! Where is you goin', Mammy?"

But all Sis' Alligator say is, "Git 'way, an' let me 'lone."

Den dey run to dey Pa, an' tease, "Pappy, Mammy say you is for tell we where you is goin'."

Br' Gator is bex but he see taint no use to try for hold back. "I go for see Trouble."

"Pappy! Kin we go? Kin we go?" An' dem chillen all jump up an' down, an' holler, an' beg him.

'Br' Gator tell 'em, "*No*!"

So dem run to dey Ma, an' ax, "Mammy, kin we go?"

An' dey Ma tell-'em-say, "If you' Pa say you kin go, den you kin go."

So back dem gone at dey Pa. "Ma say we kin go if you jis' let we!"

By dis time Br' Gator is plumb wore out, so he say, "Well, den, yes! You kin go. But fix you'self nice an' purty. An' act mannersable, now! You is to show Br' Rabbit how much better water-chillen behave dan woods-chillen!"

Dem run for fix deyself nice, an' turreckly dey is all dress up for gone out. Dey hab on dey bes', wid mud on dey head, an' marsh on dey back, an' moonshine on dey tails, an' dey t'ink dat dey jis' look fine.

'Bout dis time Br' Gator look out de do', an' see dat

de jew is mos' off de grass. He call he wife an' he chillen, "Come on!"

An' dem come a-crowdin', an' all gone out on de rice fiel' bank to wait on Br' Rabbit.

XXIII

Dey aint been there long, 'fore here come Br' Rabbit, a-smokin' he pipe. When he git up wid dem, he been s'prise to see what a hebby haul he is mek—de whole drat fambly. He laugh to hisself, but he ain' say nothin', but jus' say, "Howdy," to Br' Gator an' he wife. An' he tell 'em, "How nice de chillen is all a-lookin'!" But all de time he say to heself, "Do Lord! Dis is a oagly gang o' people. An' how mean dey clo'es is! Dat 'oman is a po' buckra hussy, for true."

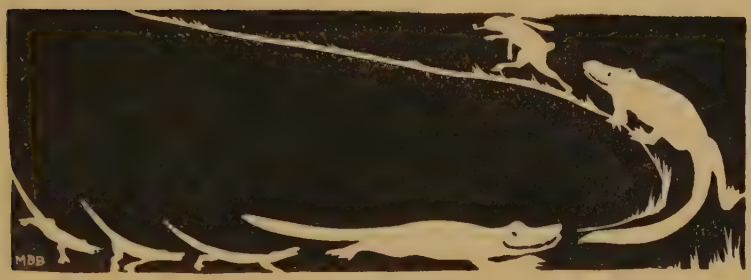
Br' Gator aint eben 'pologize to him for fetch sich a crowd. All he say is, "Dey all beg me so dat I hab to gib in, an' let 'em come 'long."

Br' Rabbit say, "Plenty o' room for all. Hope you will all enjoy yo'self."

"T'enky!" dey all tell him. An' de chillen all been dat glad dat Br' Rabbit ain' sen' 'em home dey all dance 'bout wid joy.

Dey look so comical, a-histin' dey nose an' dey tail, till Br' Rabbit mos' laugh in dey face. But 'stid o' dat he squinch up he eyebrow an' look at he watch, an' say, "Time to gone 'long, I reckin."

So dem all start down de rice fiel' bank, Br' Rabbit an' Br' Gator leadin' off, wid Sis' Alligator walkin' behin' to mek de leetle Alligator behave deyself'. But dey wouldn't hardly mind she—dey played 'long, or dawdled, or fit, till dey 'most set her 'stracted.



Br' Rabbit lead dem up through a patch o' woods till he git to a ol' fiel' all growed up full o' broom-grass an' briar! De grass stan' so t'ick you hardly kin see roun' in it an' tis dry as tinder, an' yaller like de pure gol'. De path dem tek gone spang through de fiel', an' twas a big fiel' too. Br' Rabbit lead, an' after a while dem git to de middle o' de fiel', an' den he stop.

Br' Rabbit tek he pipe out he mout', an' he clap he han' to he ear, an' mek out like he listen. Seem like he hear somet'ing. "Sh!" he tell de chillen.

Sis' Alligator say, "Sh! Sh! Or I'll lick de tar out o' you!"

After Br' Rabbit listen some mo', he shout out, "Who dat a-callin' Br' Rabbit?"

Den he mek out like he yeddy somet'in' mo', an' yell back, "Yes. Tis me. What you want wid me?"

He clap he han' to he ear again, an' den he say, "I is comin' right now." An' he turn to Br' Gator an' tell him, "Ax yo' pardon, but somebody is callin' me 'way a minute on a business. Please for 'scuse me. An' wait right whe' you is till I kin git back."

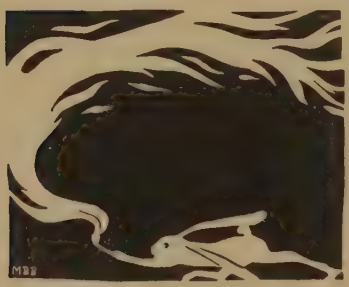
"We goin' to stay right here," Br' Gator promise.

Br' Rabbit mek him a low bow, an' run 'long de path,

out o' sight. Dat 'ceitful debbil gone till he git to de edge o' de woods, an' set heself down an' snigger to heself like he was tastin' de fun before he started it. Den he gone to business.

He smell de wind an' look which way it is drivin'. Den he pull a handful o' dat long, dry broom-grass, an' he knock out de hot coal from he pipe on it, an' he blow till de grass catch fire good. Den he run long de edge o' de fiel' wid de fire, an' set de fiel' roun' an' roun'. When he is done dat, he git up on a safe high stump whe' he kin see good, an' he set down an' wait.

XXIV



All dis time de Alligator been down in de middle o' de fiel'. Dey been tired wid walkin' so far, an' mighty satisfy wid res' deyself awhile.

Sis' Alligator been jus' de kind dat like for know jis' what she is goin' for see, an' she pester an' bodder Br' Gator wid w'ich-an'-w'y talk, "W'ich way is we gwine for find Trouble? Whyn you mek Br' Rabbit tell you mo' 'bout dis t'ing you is a-lookin' for? How long we got to wait?"

He aint mek she no answer, but jus' set still an' grunt ebery now an' den.

Once in awhile Sis' Alligator call to de chillen dat been a-projeckin' aroun', "Stop dat rookus!"

An' dey set, an' dey set.

De fire burn an' burn. At last de wind catch it an' it flared up high, an' de spark an' flame flew up, 'way up, in de element. One o' de leetle Alligator see dat. An' he holler out, "Look-a-dere! Look-a-dere!"

But jis den he Ma ax he Pa another squestion, an' she hesh de chillen right short.

But all de turrah res' o' dem leetle Alligators look de way dey bubbuh (brother) p'int, an' dey sing out too, "Look-a'-dere!"

An' one git a notion an' he holler out, "Mus' be dat is Trouble."

So dem all holler out, "Look a' Trouble, Ma! Look a' Trouble, Pa!"

An' Sis' Alligator turn an' look, an' she squizzit Br' Gator, "Look, Pa! Is dat Trouble for true?"

Br' Gator been so ignorant he ain' know. He lib in water an' mud, an' he aint ebber see fire till now, but he ain' feel easy in he mind. "Reckin mebbe Br' Rabbit git los' or somepn?" he ax Sis' Alligator, widout answer de squestion.

Den one o' de chillen sing out, "Trouble is pretty!"

An' wid dat, all o' de brats h'ist dey tail an' dey voice, an' holler. "Trouble is pretty! Trouble is pretty! Trouble is pretty!"

Br' Gator say, "If dat is Trouble, he sho' 'nough is pretty! De chile speak de trut'." An' he an' he wife set a-gogglin' dey big eye up in de element, watchin' de fire come on, an' dey kind o' forgit all 'bout Br' Rabbit. An' all de chillen goggle dey eye too, same as dey Ma an' Pa, an' keep still, as if dey been 'fraid dat dey might scare Trouble away.

At las' a hot spark lan' right on one o' dem leetle Alligator' back. An' he squall, an' cry out, "Trouble hurt! O'hey! O'hey! O'hey!"

He Ma fetch him a smack in de jaw an' tell him to mind he manners an' shut up, an' look how pretty Trouble is. But jus' as she done so, a hebby spark light on she, an' burn she too bad. An' she start for jump 'bout, an' holler.

"Tis true Trouble hurt! Trouble hurt for true! O-hey! O-hey! O-hey!" An' dey 'member quick who dey is forgit! "Br' Rabbit! Br' Rabbit! We don't want to see no mo' o' Trouble, Br' Rabbit! Oh, Br' Rabbit!"

Well, my frien', 'bout dat time de spark begin for sweeten de whole lot o' dem. Dey is dat put to it dey don't know whaffor do. An' dey run 'bout an' run 'bout, dis way an' dat way, for git out; but eberywhere dem turn is de fire. An' dey holler out, an' holler out, "Br' Rabbit, whe' is you? Call to Trouble, Br' Rabbit! Come for we! Ooh, Br' Rabbit!"

But Br' Rabbit ain' come, an' he ain' say nothin'. An' mighty soon de fire git so close on dem Gator', dat dey can't hol' dey groun' no longer. Dey quit callin' on Br' Rabbit, an' jis' git ready for breck t'rough de best dey kin.

Dey ain' got no notion o' nothin' lef' in dey head but *Git Home!*

Sis' Alligator holler, "Chillen, foller you' Pa."

An' right t'rough de scorchin' fire dey bus', Sis' Alligator a-herdin' dem. Dey don't walk so fas' ebery day, but dis been a special day, wid dat hot fire a-blisterin' an' a-frizzlin' 'em, an' dey gone a-runnin'. After dey git t'rough dey ain' slow up. Dey gone past Br' Rabbit

just a-scuttlin'! An' dey look dat comical till Br' Rabbit most fall off de stump, he laugh so hard.

"Ki, Br' Alligator!" he shout, "I reckin you is seen Trouble now! Git 'long back in de water, where you belong. An' don't nebber, no mo', hunt Trouble!"

But dem Gator been too busy runnin' to stop to argue wid him.

Dem aint stop till dey git spang to de rice fiel' bank an' jump in de ribber. An' dey is still so hot from de fire when dey gone over-board an' de water hit dem, it gone "Swiiish-ssssssssh-sh!" An' de pure steam rise up like a cloud.

Dey aint come out again de lib-long day, nor dat night needer; but when next dey git a chance to look 'pon one anudder dey find dat de fire work on dem so bad dat dey white skin is just as black an' crinkly as a burnt log o' wood, an' rough as libe-oak bark. Dat family done git *swinged* for bein' so fool. An' from dat day to dis Gator hab a horny hide.

VII

HOW COME DE HUMP ON BR' FROG BACK

HOW COME DE HUMP ON BR' FROG BACK

XXV Over-reaching revenge XXVI outdone by boldness, XXVII by intelligence XXVIII and by ingenuity. XXIX The lesson of the innocent bystander XXX who, unable to say no, XXXI turneth reformer XXXII and is rewarded for his complaisance at once XXXIII and again in an evolutionary manner.

XXV

Look like Br' Wolf an' Br' Rabbit nebber could git 'long. Br' Rabbit is so full o' tricks an' meanness dat a whole lot o' people aint got no use for him noway, an' de worst man for dat is Br' Wolf. Dey is foreber in a heap o' trouble wid each udder; but mostly tis Br' Wolf hab de trouble an' Br' Rabbit jis' hab de sport. Br' Rabbit fool him. Br' Rabbit t'ief Br' Wolf' t'ing, sassy he wife, tease an' pester he chillen, an' muddy he branch, whe' he git he water for drinkin', till Br' Wolf can't res'.

Dat how come Br' Wolf fair skin he eye a-watchin' for Br' Rabbit. Time an' agin Br' Wolf lay for him, but Br' Rabbit is a *soon* man. Br' Wolf gi' de word out to all de creeter dat when he is catch Br' Rabbit he goin' to teach him a lesson he aint ebber goin' to forgit. But when de creeters tell Br' Rabbit, he jus' laugh, an' cock up he ear, an' all Br' Wolf git to see o' him after dat for a long while is de place what he lef' de day befo' yesterday.

De longer he wait, de mo' Br' Wolf han's pure itch for lick Br' Rabbit. But nothin' happen till one fo'noon,

Br' Wolf been a-walk de Big Road bodderin' 'bout Br' Rabbit, an' all dem dirty trick dat debbil is played him. He is jis' a-rarin' to ketch dat creeter. De road run t'rough some old fiel's, an' de ditch bank been growed up t'ick wid sassyfrass-bush, an' cassina-berry an' t'ing, so you couldn't see in de fiel' none 'tall. De dus' is hebby in de road, an' Br' Wolf foot fall so light till heself couldn't hear it.

Now jes' as God sen' it, as Br' Wolf git by a little pat', what branch into de road, he yeddy somebody talkin', an' he stop short. Look like he luck change! For tis Br' Rabbit, an' he is studyin' he head so fait'ful 'bout a somet'in'-or-nurrer, till he start talkin' to heself. He aint got Br' Wolf eben in de back o' he mind till he walk spang into him.

Br' Wolf is most as 'sprised as Br' Rabbit, 'cause Br' Rabbit is too careful most o' de time for gone long dat unmindful. But he been so sure dat Br' Rabbit can't git 'way dis time, dat he waste jis' a second befo' he pounce to let out a whoop, "Now I got yuh!"

But when he jump Br' Rabbit aint dere.

XXVI

Br' Rabbit light a rag back up de pat', an' he is scared for true! He run fas', but Br' Wolf don't slouch none on he own account, an' Br' Rabbit aint got too much o' lead. He see he aint goin' to get away wid straight runnin', but he keep a bol' heart, an' he aint los' he sense. He head straight for a snake-fench out in a ol' fiel'. De rail is set so he kin duck under, but close 'nough so Br' Wolf'll hab to gone ober, an' Br' Rabbit trus' to ketch a little headway by de short cut.

Jis' as he git to de fench an' slide t'rough, Br' Wolf grab down on one o' he hind foots, an' yell out, "Ha, Buck! I got you now! Enty?"

Br' Rabbit head work quick. He t'ink ob a trick. He aint try for kick loose, nor nothin'. He lie jus' as still as if he been dead.

Br' Wolf was dat satisfied dat he had Br' Rabbit, he t'ink he got time for ketch he breat', an' mock at him. An' he say, "Now, suh! You goin' to hab toko-for-nyam (a good licking) dis day for dinner! I goin' to gi' you all I promise you dis long time."

Br' Rabbit holler back in a bol' voice, "Dat's whe' you is wrong again! Look a' dat t'ing in you' han'! Dat's jus' somet'in' I bring 'long for fool you—taint nothin' but me Mammy' butter-paddle!"

Br' Rabbit talk so big, an' he keep he foot so still, dat Br' Wolf look an' see dat sho' 'nough de t'ing is like a butter-paddle, an' mos' b'liebe him! He loose de foot for grab t'rough de fench to git a grip on Br' Rabbit' carcass.

But Br' Rabbit jump an' gone again, jis' a-trabblin'.

Br' Wolf clear de fench, an' tek out, mo' like flyin' dan runnin', till he is right up wid Br' Rabbit agin.

Br' Rabbit double, an' Br' Rabbit dodge, but he still can't get no headway. Br' Wolf is too close for lose dat-a-way.

Br' Rabbit mek for anudder fench, an' trus' he luck to change, but it look like he aint got none 'tall dat day,

'cause jis' as he duck under de bottomes' rail, Br' Wolf ketch hol' o' he tail, an' hang on.

He been so happy he mos' sing, "Come on out, son—'fore I pull you out! Now you goin' to git de sugarin' I got waitin' for you, an' somet'in' more, for braughtus!"

Br' Rabbit sho' t'ink he time is come, but he heart ain' fail him, an' he head is 'sponsible yit. Again he lie still, an' dis time he holler back in a leetle voice, like as if he been a long way off, "What you do talk 'bout, Br' Wolf? Look, an' look fas', at what you got! Taint a blessed t'ing but a lock o' my Pa' new cotton!"

Br' Wolf been so used to Br' Rabbit foolin' him dat he ain' trus' heself. When he look for see if tis so, he hold only slack up a leetle bit, but dat's jis' enough for Br' Rabbit to juck loose an' gone!

But Br' Rabbit aint trabble no distance, not so much as a task, before he feel Br' Wolf' hot breat' on he hind foot ebery time he stretch out to jump. He aint had too much luck wid fench an' ol' fiel', so dis time he head for de woods. An' he aint fool heself. He knowed dat if somet'in' don't happen, an' happen right now, he is goin' to hab to gib up. He breat' mos' fail him, an' he heart hit he ribs so hard it feel like dem goin' to crack. He figger if tis better to git you' back broke wid runnin' or wid lickin'—but he aint lost no time a-choosin'.

He look ebery which-away for some kind o' 'sistance, an' call on he luck; but dat aint answer. An' jus' when he reckin he is boun' to git cotch, all on a suddent dat slippery luck o' hisn come back! He foot ketch in a black-berry-wine, an' he trip, an' tumble head ober heel down a hole in de groun'!

Br' Rabbit is tarrify for fear Br' Wolf will fall in too, but Br' Wolf been goin' dat fas' he run clean ober de hole. Br' Rabbit scramble down deep, an' when he look roun' he find dat he is in Br' Anch' (Ant's) house, an' taint big 'nough for let Br' Wolf come in. Den Br' Rabbit is mo' easy, an' say to heself mighty satisfy-like, "Uh-huh! A bol' heart ebber did fetch luck half-way!"

XXVII

He aint know what is goin' to happen nex', an' he harken, but he aint hear nothin'. He reckin Br' Wolf mebbe aint see de hole-mout' at all, an' can't figger where he kin be, when jis' den somet'ing close down on de hole-top so dat dey aint so much as a crack o' daylight come in.

Br' Rabbit hol' he breat' an' listen, an' study 'bout what is 'pon-top de hole. He sneak a little way up, for find out, an' listen some mo', but he ain' hear a soun'. He git up close to de hole-mout', 'cause he is crazy-curious for know what stop it up. He reach way out jis' as far as he kin, till he han' tetch somet'ing.

Tis Br' Wolf's hairy ham!

Br' Rabbit t'row heself back down dat Anch' hole so quick he mos' break he neck. Den he figger out what Br' Wolf is up to. He is set down slam 'pon-top o' de hole-mout' while he res' a little bit, but twon't be long befo' he' ll turn to, an' dig dat hole out!

Br' Rabbit aint safe yet, an' dey aint nobody roun' for help him out, 'cause Br' Anch aint to home. But he figger dat he got a chance. If he kin only mek Br' Wolf rise up offn de hole, den mebbe he kin dash be-

twix' Br' Wolf's legs an' git 'way. But how is he gwine mek Br' Wolf h'ist heself?

Br' Rabbit study an' he study 'bout dat t'ing, an' all de time de air is gittin' mighty close, wid Br' Wolf sittin' on de hole-mout' so fait'ful, but he can't scheme out nothin'. Den all ob a suddent he hab it! He blind-God (other self) mek him 'member 'bout what Br' Anch does do when he wants people for gone 'way an' let him 'lone.

Br' Rabbit search roun' in he leetle coat lapel till he find a pin. Den he squeal out in a li'l skee-wee voice, like Br' Anch' own: "Git 'way from here, an' let my house 'lone." An' he gib Br' Wolf a joug (punch) wid de pin.

De joug sweeten Br' Wolf good. He yell, an' he jump—but not 'nough for Br' Rabbit to git out. Br' Wolf grab at de place whe' de pin git him, an' rub it. An' he holler out, "What de dickens you doin'? Mind how you bex me any mo', Br' Rabbit, an' mind mighty quick, too! You got enough o' trouble comin' to you, widout you mekin' it de wusser wid mo' o' you' dirty trick!" An' he clap heself tight down on de hole-mout' agin.

Br' Rabbit answer him back in dat same little skee-wee voice, "Dis aint Br' Rabbit you habs for deal wid. Dis here is Br' Anch. How you mek bol' to come here, an' set yo' self down on me house door, you no-manners t'ing? Git 'way from here." An' wid dat he gin him anudder good joug wid de pin.

Br' Wolf jump, an' he holler, "Hey! You lemme 'lone, Br' Anch!" But stid o' gittin' up, he settle heself back down on de hole, an' say, "You *bes*' lemme 'lone, Br' Anch. I aint wants you an' me to hab no trouble

twix' one anudder today. Me han's is full up enough! Br' Rabbit hide in yo' house, an' if he don't come out turreckly I goin' to dig in an' git him. An'—Boy! If you bodder me I goin' lick de hide offn you too!"

Br' Rabbit aint say nothin', but he reach 'way down, an' haul off for git a good start for dat pin. Den, jus' as hard as he kin, he joug it into Br' Wolf's behime end till eben de head is buried in he meat.

Dat time de t'ing hurt Br' Wolf so bad dat he let out a yell you could hear mos' to Africa. He jump spang up off de hole, he clap he han' to he haunch, an' ki-yi, an' dance 'bout. He aint stedy 'bout anyt'ing but git out de pin, an' he can't find de head!

Br' Rabbit aint waitin' on dat. He been out an' off. After de fus' jump dat Br' Wolf mek, nothin' mo' didn't int'res' Br' Rabbit roun' dere.

XXVIII

Jus' as Br' Wolf find de pin-head, he ketch sight o' Br' Rabbit, clearin' out. An' Br' Wolf is dat tearin' mad dat he kin hardly stan' still for git dat pin out o' he meat. Den he let out a yell, an' tek 'way after Br' Rabbit.

Br' Rabbit hab a long way for go to git to de woods, but he hab a good start. When he mos' git dere, he cut he eye roun' over he shoulder for see how he is mekin' out, an' find Br' Wolf is right 'pon-top ob him. Look like he hab los' out for true. Jis' den he seen a pine tree wid a hollow close to de roots, an' right 'longside him. He turn an' mek one jump sideways, an' clamber up in it.

Br' Wolf turn mos' as quick as Br' Rabbit, an' ram heself in de hole. But de t'ing run high an' hab a nar-

row t'roat. He done de bes' he kin for twis' roun' an' squeedge heself in, 'fore he see he can't mek it, an' he git heself all jam-up, an' scared lest he aint nebber goin' git out.

When he pull out at las', he shake an' he blow. Den he call up de hollow, "Come out, you raskil!"

Br' Rabbit aint let on to hear.

Br' Wolf cry out again, "Come *out*, you debbil, or I goin' to mek fire an' smoke you out!"

Br' Rabbit hair riz up. If Br' Wolf put fire in dat hollow he is goin' to dead *dead*.

Den Br' Wolf begin for cuss. He cuss Br' Rabbit! He cuss he luck! He cuss he matches. 'Cause he aint find nothin' in he pocket for light fire wid.

When Br' Rabbit yeddy him cuss like dat he feel mo' better. He still know he is got a chance if Br' Wolf can't mek no fire under him.

But den Br' Wolf say, "Nemmine, boy! Hol' right still jus' like you is! An' I will twist you out."

Br' Rabbit been tarrified. Br' Wolf goin' to tear him to bits. He scratch roun' an' clambered up, sarchin' de holler for a crack or a cranny to hide in.

Br' Wolf pick out de longes' forked stick he kin find an' try for git it in de mout' o' de hollow. Dat one is too stiff, an' won't go in. Br' Wolf cuss again, an' broke de stick against de tree. Den he got a long soople saplin' wid a forkity end, an' he poked it up. It worked into de tree nice, an' he gone to twistin' an' shovin' till he reached de top o' de hollow. But jis' as de saplin' git to Br' Rabbit, he found him a cranny and squeezed into it as de stick went by. Tenk God!

Br' Wolf twis' wid de stick, an' twis' wid de stick, but he aint bring down nothin' but punkwood an' dus', an' dat gi' Br' Rabbit a notion. He gone to scratchin' in dat cranny, an' send down mos' a kettle full o' dirt right in Br' Wolf' face. Br' Wolf snort an' he blow; he tried to keep on twistin' but de dust is too strong. He seen he couldn't git Br' Rabbit dat way, an' he back off from de hole. "Dat's alright," he holler, "You is comin' out jis' de same when I git good an' ready. An' when you does, I goin' to sho' bust yo' crust!"

But while Br' Rabbit scratch in dat punk, he open up a little knot-hole in de bark o' dat tree, whe' he kin peek out at Br' Wolf widout bein' seen. Br' Wolf settin' dere lookin' at de hole an' t'inkin', an' Br' Rabbit say to heself, "I bes' gi' dat fellow somet'in' to t'ink about, or he'll git in some mo' mischief!"

Br' Rabbit draw back from de knot-hole an' holler down inside de tree, in dat bold voice dat he use when Br' Wolf fus' lay he han' on him, "Whe' dat butter-paddle now?"

De hollow tree mek Br' Rabbit's voice sound all de bigger, an' when dat squestion hit Br' Wolf' ear he jump like somebody joug him agin.

Br' Rabbit holler out agin mo' louder, "Whe' dat cotton is dat you been a-hold so tight?"

Br' Wolf aint like for figger how bad he been fooled, an' he shake he years. He is mighty bex, but he aint say nothin'.

Br' Rabbit change to dat little skee-wee voice what he use to soun' like Br' Anch. An' he sing out, "Git 'way from here, I tell you!"

Br' Wolf yell out, "You bes' quit yo' foolishness, Br' Rabbit, an' lemme 'lone. Too much o' lickin' comin' on dat drat short-tail hide o' yo'n, widout you axin' for any mo', leastways from me! Mind now, an' shut up yo' mout'!"

Br' Rabbit peek out o' de knot-hole, an' chuckle for see how bex Br' Wolf git. Den he t'row he voice down in de tree-trunk again, an' mock Br' Wolf. " 'You bes' lemme 'lone, Br' Anch!' "

Br' Wolf can't stan' dat. He jump in de hollow, an' he twis' up wid de saplin', an' stretch heself. But all he git is leetle piece o' Br' Rabbit' fur. Br' Rabbit t'row down a whole lot o' punk-dust in de hole, an' set Br' Wolf a-kat-choo-in'.

Br' Wolf git all tanglety-up in de t'roat o' de hollow, an' he git so mad he bite at de tree, an' hurt he mout' 'fore he pull heself out.

Soon as Br' Rabbit see outn de knot-hole he been safe again for awhile, he let out a "Ki-yi! Ki-yi! Ki-yi!" same like Br' Wolf done when dat pin sweeten him good.

Br' Wolf can't contain heself. He yell in de tree, "Eeder you or me is goin' to dead roun' dis tree 'bout dis t'ing! I mebbe got to stay here till Stepney (starvation) git me, but I is sho' goin' for fix you fust or last!"

"I t'ank you, Maussuh, dat you tell me dat! If we goin' res' here a long time I been glad dat me is in de house an' you on de outside! Mek you don't set down, suh, an' res' yo'self awhile?"

Br' Wolf can't sit down. He jus' stan' back, an' stedy hard.

An' dem all two aint say nothin'.

XXIX

Turreckly dey both yeddy somet'in'—plujunk! plujunk!—whe' some creeter is a-trabblin' de woods. Br' Wolf look till he kin see. Tis Br' Frog comin' from de creek, dat run 'long 'bout two task away from there.

Br' Wolf yell out, "Br' Frog! Oh, Br' Frog! Step dis day, Br' Frog!"

Br' Frog res' in he track, an' call back, "Who dat?"

Br' Wolf say mighty sharp, "If you aint git here drat quick you will mighty soon find out *who!* Come here! An' come a-runnin'!"

Br' Frog ain't nebber care much for go 'bout wid strangers an' he aint like de bowdacious way Br' Wolf call him. But he been a 'bejient creeter, so he mek answer, "Yessuh," an' he come a-hoppin' right along.

When he see tis Br' Wolf, he ax mighty polite, "What you want, suh?"

"Is you got any matches?"

"No suh. Me aint hab a one. Whe' I lib in de creek, I aint hab no use for no fire nor pipe nor nothin' like dat. But if you would like a chew, I got a good twis' o' niggerhead tobacco."

"I swear-to-God, Br' Frog, you aint wut!" (You're worthless).

"Yessuh."

Br' Wolf grab he stick, an' it look like he goin' to bus' Br' Frog in two, he so mad, but he change he mind, an' study some more. Den he say, "You reckin you kin watch dis hole for me, wid dem pop-eye o' yourn?"

"What mek you want me for done dat, suh?"

"Mos'ly 'cause I tell you!"

"Yessuh."

Br' Wolf see he is got Br' Frog scared till he is pure stupid, so he 'splain. "Br' Rabbit is in dat hollow. While I go to fetch tackle an' t'ing for git him out, you habs for see dat he stay whe' he is."

"How! Br' Rabbit git cotch in de tree?"

"De debbil, man! Br' Rabbit aint *git* cotch in de tree! 'Tis me *run* him in de tree for cotch him an' lick him, but de drat hollow is too leetle an' too crooked for me to twis' him out."

"How, Br' Wolf, what you want wid Br' Rabbit?"

"Great Master! You bex me too much. Aint you know 'bout all de trouble dat Br' Rabbit gi' me, an' can't t'ink o' nothin' better to do dan ax me sich a fool squestion?"

"Yessuh."

"What de mischief you mean by 'Yessuh'?"

"I mean, no, suh!"

"Don't you yessuh me no mo'! Now, I reckin I goin' have to resplain de whole t'ing to you all ober. I is goin' git Br' Rabbit out o' dat tree, an' I aint exactly mek up me mind what I *aint* goin' do wid him, but, while I mek up my mind, I is sho' goin' to lick him till me arm is tired, an' learn him some manners. When I is put all de sweetenin' on him dat his hide will hold up under, I is goin' to teach him sich a good lesson, 'bout lef' me an' me fambly an' me t'ings 'lone, till I reckin he aint goin' to bodder me, nor maybe nobody else, no more. You understand dat now, I s'pose?"

"Yessuh."

"All right den! Now you git you a good stick, an' you stan' by de hollow-mout'. An' if Br' Rabbit try for

come out you is to frail him, and *don't spare*! Frail him back in de hollow. Mind yo' eye, now. You done what I tell you, an' don't let him git 'way, or I gwine put some o' de lickin' on you I been savin' for him."

"Yessuh. Yessuh," Br' Frog say jis' a-trimblin'. He git him a stick, an' tek he post.

Br' Wolf start home for git he tackle, an' he holler back, "Tek care, Br' Frog, an' do as I tell you, so I won't hab to raise my han' to you. If I hab to so much as tetch you, you won't be able to wiggle when I git done."

"Yessuh! No suh! Yessuh!"

XXX

Br' Frog set to de hollow like a cat to a rat-hole.

For a long while Br' Rabbit look down through de knot-hole widout a soun'. He watch for see if maybe Br' Frog won't lay down dat stick an' tek a nap.

Br' Frog aint do dat.

Br' Rabbit say to heself, "Taint no use waitin'! He too scared to fall asleep. All dis time I watch him he aint eben wink dat pop-eye o' his."

An' Br' Rabbit study awhile mo'. Den he say down de inside de tree in a right low voice, "Br' Frog!"

Br' Frog hol' he stick mo' tight, an' aint mek no answer.

"Br' Frog! Is you hear me?"

"What you want?"

"Br' Frog, is Br' Wolf gone for true?"

"Yessuh. He done gone."

"Well, den, let's we git away from here."

"No suh, no suh! Dat can't be."

"Why, Br' Frog? Man, if we start right now, we kin git a long way from here, 'fore Br' Wolf git back."

"Yessuh. Dat is so. But dat can't be."

"What de debbil you mean by dat, Br' Frog? I aint nebber done nothin' to you. You aint goin' hold me here for dat Satan for come back an' git me, is you?"

"No suh! Dat is, yessuh. I bleege for hol' you right here."

"Man! You aint want to see me dead right in dis woods today!"

"No, Bubbuh, I aint want to see nobody dead—de least ob all myself. Dat's why I hab for mek you stay where you is."

"Do, Br' Frog! If we go 'long like I tell you Br' Wolf aint got a chance for so much as ketch sight o' you."

XXXI

"Br' Wolf been too fas' for me to git 'way from. An' I can't run like you, Br' Rabbit. Br' Wolf tol' me for stay here. Furdermore, I know you muddy Br' Wolf branch, an' mebbe dat lickin' he promise might stop yo' meanness!"

"I aint nebber mean no harm to Br' Wolf, Br' Frog. You know I aint mean no harm! Br' Frog, I should t'ink yo' arm would be mighty tired a-holdin' dat big stick. Why don't you lay him down?"

Br' Frog look like maybe he will, but den he shake he head. "No, suh, Br' Rabbit. Dat stick don't leave my hand till Br' Wolf git back."

When he can't fool Br' Frog, Br' Rabbit try for 'tice him. "Alright, den, Br' Frog. Jis' as you please,

o' cose. But you an' me is frien's, enty? You aint need dat stick. Look here, Br' Frog, is you ebber seen dat fine new weskit I got? Look like we might go on home, if you'd like to see dat, an' if it look good on you I'll gib it to you."

"What kind o' weskit?"

"Bright red wid gol' braid, an' gol' buttons."

Br' Frog study. An' den he wink one eye an' say, "How 'bout come tomorrow, Br' Rabbit?"

Dat aint suit Br' Rabbit at all, but he talk mo' sweet mout' dan ebber.

"But you could wear it home dis night, Br' Frog. You would look dat fine till yo' chillen wouldn't hardly know dey own Pa!"

Br' Frog look like he would like to gone but den he shake he head. He aint trus' Br' Rabbit. "You bes' ax Br' Wolf' pardon, an' beg off he lickin'. Promise for act mannersable, an' after dis, let he fambly an' he t'ing alone."

Br' Rabbit see he aint gittin' on dat-away, so he shet he mout' an' study he head good. He blind-God sho' got to help him now! An', sho' 'nough, he 'member jus' den 'bout dat tobacco Br' Frog tell Br' Wolf he hab.

He mek a moan. Den he grunt. Den he groan. An' den he groan, an' he grunt, an' he grunt, an' he groan.

Turreckly Br' Frog ax him, "What ail you, Br' Rabbit? Somet'ing pain you, eh?"

"OOhee! OOhee! Oheeee!" Br' Rabbit moan, and groan, an' grunt. "All on a sudden I got a shootin' misery in me jaw! Come all at once! Ohee! Oohee!"

Br' Frog been kind-heart'. He say, "Now, dat is too

bad, Br' Rabbit. An' you in sich a peck o' trouble already! I sho' is sorry for you dis day."

Br' Rabbit groan some mo', while he study 'bout axin' Br' Frog why, if he been so sorry, aint he let him git away? But he 'cide dat it aint no use, an' he say, "You aint happens for hab anyt'ing good for de toot'ache, is you, Br' Frog?"

"No, suh."

"Aint you got a little tobacco?"

"Yessuh, I got some niggerhead."

"Do gi' me jus' a little chew. Dat's de bery t'ing I want."

Br' Rabbit start for come down de hollow for git it, but Br' Frog tell him, "Hol' on dere!"

"Do, Br' Frog, how I gwine git de tobacco, den?"

"Tek it off dis fork stick, when I poke it up dere."

Br' Rabbit bit off a good piece, an' threw de res' back, an' say, "T'ank you, Br' Frog. T'ank you kin'ly." An' he start to chew. He chew, an' he chew. He chew till he git he mout' so full o' spit till he jus' kin holler out through the knot-hole, "Look here, Br' Frog! Look up here quick!"

Br' Frog aint 'speck for hear Br' Rabbit' voice outside de tree like dat. He cock dem big eye up at de knot-hole.

XXXII

Br' Rabbit tek good aim. He spit! An' he spit so smart dat he fill up all-two o' dem goggle eye wid dat tobacco juice!

Br' Frog eye feel like dey was a-fire. Great Master! How dat tobacco burn! He yell, an' rub he eye wid

he han'. Dat aint done him no good. Look like de juice jus' burn him de mo'. He start for de creek, an' he gone a-hoppin'.

Br' Rabbit aint pay no 'tention to him. He out an' gone, too, an' he aint gone slow, needer, 'cause Br' Rabbit always say, "Trus' no mistake!"

Br' Frog git to de creek somehow, an' wash he eye, an' wash he eye. An' when he git he eye clean out, he aint hab no better sense, 'stid o' jump in de creek he-self, dan to go back to dat hollow tree to look out for Br' Rabbit.

When he git back to de tree he yell up de hollow: "Br' Rabbit, man! How you could ha' done me dat-a-way?"

He aint git no answer. He is dat stupid dat he yell agin, 'fore he mek out dat Br' Rabbit been gone. Den he is tarrify, an' turn 'roun' to hop it fas' for de creek for git 'way heself, when he yeddy Br' Wolf a-comin'. Br' Frog hab jus' enough wits lef' for set down an' regard de hole like he ain' nebber stirred.

"Well, Br' Frog! You got Br' Rabbit right safe?"

"Yessuh."

"You aint let him git away?"

"No suh."

Br' Wolf been all weighed down wid rope, an' axe an' all sort o' tackle. "Well, den I got him fix'. Lessee now what he goin' do!" He drop he load, an' he shout up de hollow tree, "You bes' come out while you is whole, Br' Rabbit, an' tek yo' lickin'. 'Cause I got fire here for burn you out. An' I got axe for chop you out, an' I got rope for tie you up, an' I got eberyt'ing for fix you, howeber you turn for git 'way."

But no soun' come out de tree.

"Jus' as you like, den!" Br' Wolf shout. An' he start a fire in de hollow mout' an' t'row moss an' t'ing on it, for mek a hebby smoke.

Smoke fill de tree. Br' Wolf watch an' listen for Br' Rabbit to drop down in de fire. But nothin' aint happen.

Dat time Br' Frog would have sure like to speak de truth, but he is 'fraid. He aint know whaffor do! If he could only mek it to de creek he would be all right—but he t'ink 'bout de two task he got to kibber, an' he know good he would git cotch. He kin hardly stan' up, let 'lone trabble.

But Br' Wolf aint t'ink 'bout him. "Aha! You stubbornt, eh?" he holler up de tree. "Alright, stay dere an' wait, den. I goin' to chop you out!" An' he draw de fire, an' peel off he coat, an' he spit on he han', an' he grab he axe-stick, an' he gone to choppin'.

Turreckly de tree start to tremble an' Br' Wolf hit it a lick, an' call out, "Now she is a-comin', Br' Frog. Stan' back. Watch good. See which way Br' Rabbit try for jump."

Den de tree gone creak! An' creak! An' den it come down—Crass-ash *bang!* Br' Wolf run in for try to catch Br' Rabbit, if he come out.

Aint a t'ing stir.

"Where is he, Br' Frog?"

"He aint git out de hollow, Suh. Must be he is playin' possum." Br' Frog in such a fix he gots to keep up de lie.

"Den I'll log de tree an' get him."

Br' Wolf tap long de trunk till he found de head o' de hollow an' cut de tree in two. Dey rolled de log ober an' squinched t'rough it, but de only folks dey could

see was each udder, an' Br' Wolf scowl so at Br' Frog dat he gone to lyin' again. "See dat lump dere, Br' Wolf? Dat's him! Reckin he is hurt, he is lyin' so still!"

"I wouldn't hab dat for a pretty," Br' Wolf say, sort o' anxious, "I would too like to hab dat fellow wid a nice clean hide to start on!"

Br' Wolf gone to splittin' de log, while Br' Frog walk 'bout pretendin' to mind-out for Br' Rabbit, but watchin' he chance to git 'way. Br' Wolf scared him so he is actin' almost sensible.

De lump weren't nothin' but a big lightwood knot. Br' Wolf turn on Br' Frog, an' say t'rough he teet', "Now whe' he is?"

Br' Frog's sure now dat he got in de tree top. Br' Wolf clean de top up an' t'row 'way de branches.

Br' Frog swear den Br' Rabbit is in some cranny in de trunk.

Br' Wolf so mad by now he won't stop to t'ink. He chop dat trunk to cord-wood, an' de cord-wood to kindlin', searchin' ebery which-a-way for Br' Rabbit, till dere aint nothin' left big enough to hide a rat in, but dat light-wood chunk.

He eye stan' red den for true, an' he stop an' frown at Br' Frog stiddy. "Whe' you t'ink Br' Rabbit is, now?" Br' Wolf ax him, "Boy, dis here is yo' las' chance."

"Look-a-dere! Look-a-dere! I see him inside! T'rough dat crack in de chunk!" Br' Frog holler, an' he t'row dat lie so fast dat Br' Wolf t'ink Br' Frog mus' see him for a fact, an' he spit on he hands good. He swing he axe high to split de chunk, but he been dat tired de lick fail. He so dumb mad he couldn't

eben cuss. An' he turn he back on Br' Frog, an' move roun' to de turrah end o' de piece to git a better adwantage on it.

Br' Frog jus' gots for gone, whedder he kin or no, an' he start for scuttle away.

Br' Wolf gib two or t'ree good lick 'fore de t'ing split.

All dat time, Br' Frog been a-trabble for de creek.

When Br' Wolf find at las' dat dey aint nothin' 'tall in dat chunk, an' nebber had been, an' dat Br' Rabbit is git clean away again after all, he turn roun' for grab Br' Frog, an' frail de life outn him, 'cause he sure got to gi' somebody dat lickin' he promise Br' Rabbit.

But Br' Frog aint whe' he was, an' Br' Wolf hear him jis' a-goin' through de bushes—Plujunk! Plujunk! Plujunk!

XXXIII

Br' Wolf cotch up a piece o' dat lightwood, an' tek out after him.

Br' Frog yeddy him a-comin', an' ebery time he hop now he look like he is long as a snake. He git dat soople tryin' to beat Br' Wolf to de creek till he jus' like injarubber ebber since; yit he can't stretch good enough. He aint been mebbe half way to de creek when Br' Wolf mos' ketch up wid him. An' Br' Wolf could ha' cotch him easy-like, only he been dat disgust' wid all o' dat day's doin's till he don't work he head. Jis' as Br' Frog rise in de element in he bes' jump, Br' Wolf haul back wid dat chunk o' lightwood an' let him hab it, as hard as ebber he kin fling!

As God sen', dat chunk ketch Br' Frog right in de middle o' he back. But it was goin' so fas' an' hard, an' Br' Frog is dat limbery, till he jus' sort o' snap roun' dat t'ing, an' ride it all de res' o' de way to de creek. Dem lan', all-two, square in de middle—Plop!

An' when Br' Wolf git to de bank, aint a sign o' Br' Frog dere, not eben a bubble comin' up—nothin' but dat lightwood chunk a-floatin' in de creek.

Br' Wolf stan' dere on de bank, an' onrabble he mout' wid cussin'—he hab for ease his mind dat-a-way, 'cause he sure aint done heself no good. He cuss high an' strong till he breat' fail him, den he cuss sof' an' low till it soun's mos' like he been linin' out a hymn chune. Not till night come did he gone 'way, but long as he waited, he aint seen hide nor hair o' Br' Frog.

Br' Frog learn a lot out o' dat. Been a long time 'fore he would done mo' dan poke he pop-eye out o' de water, he been so 'fraid o' Br' Wolf—an' ebber since he is so timperish dat he wouldn't nebber gone far from de creek. If he ain' care for go 'bout wid strange folks befo' den, he is plumb tarrify o' dem now, so dat anybody come roun' will mek him jump for de water. An' eben when he an' he fambly been holdin' meetin' an' singin' praise for rain—anybody step dat way close, an' de whole crowd will shet up short.

Anybody kin tell dis t'ing happen dat way—if dey will jis' tek a look at Br' Frog' back an' see how de hump stan'!

VIII

BR' BIG-EYE AN' DE BUSH

BR' BIG-EYE AN' DE BUSH

XXXIV Contention leads XXXV from bragging XXXVI to performance XXXVII and counter-performance; XXXVIII and the result is auto-evolutionary, with a hint of beauty-culture. XXXIX But in sweet revenge the meek inherit the prize.

XXXIV

Spring come again, an' Br' Rabbit git lively. When de wedder start for git warm all de creeter an' t'ing is bound for frolic. Ain' no time to stay 'bout de house when de dogwood is bloomin', an' de jasmine break out wid all dey little yaller blossom till all de woods smell sweet. Red-bird an' he wife play togedder in de road. Mockin' bird begin for court he gal, an' 'most ebery night seem like tis moonlight an' Whip-poor-will got to be up late tellin' eberybody tis time to plant cotton. Eben de grey moss hangin' on de tree down in de swamp forgit to be mou'nful all de time, an' start to smell sweet as a flowers. Green grass begin to push up t'rough de old pine trash from las' year, an' Br' Bull an' he fam'ly aint bleege to go down in de ribber marsh for seek green bittle no longer. Day an' night anybody dat is goin' 'long hab to stop an' sniff de air, it smell dat good!

Br' Rabbit walk 'bout.

De sun-hot warm him good, an' make him so glad de winter is done, till he git so full o' heself he is mos' afraid he will bus' in two if he aint git some excitement. He cut a caper. Dat aint ease his mind, an' he dance

roun' in de road little bit, an' practice a sashay. Dat aint hold him long. He t'row heself down in a piece o' warm broom-grass, an' wallow, an' grunt. Den he git up an' run like somebody is chasin' him, down de road an' t'rough de bush' an' all about, till he seen a big lightwood stump dead ahead o' him, an' he put for it an' jump it jis' a-flyin'. Den he stop, but still he is onrestless.

Sound like eberybody dereabouts is pledjurin' dey-self too in dat good wedder. Br' Rabbit listen a minute,

an' all around he kin yeddy dem singin', or bellowin', or squeakin', 'cordin' to dey kind. Somebody is comin' dat way jis' a-whistlin', an' Br' Rabbit look 'bout de bes' he kin wid he little eye—he eye been real little an' squinchity den—but he can't mek out who tis till de sound come more closer, an' he kin hear it good—"Bob-white! Pease-ripe! Bob-white! Pease ripe!" Den Br' Rabbit know it is Br' Partridge 'cause nobody can't whistle so good as he, an' he sure is h'istin' a chune.

"Howdy! Br' Partridge, whe' you goin'?" Br' Rabbit call out. He always would likes for hab a little company an' compersation. "You is mekin' sich haste dat if you aint mind yo' eye you gwine git whe' you gwine a whole lot too soon."

"Da's you, Br' Rabbit?" Br' Partridge call back, an' start ober dat way. "I is happy to see you!"

"Man, you sure must be happy dis day, you is whistlin' so good."

"I is dat! Boy, look like eberybody got to mek a racket in dis wedder. I aint see how you kin keep so still. You sick, enty? Or mebbe you' gal t'row you down."

"T'row *who* down? I gots a heap o' gals an' dey aint gi' me no trouble. I rules 'em! An' if you t'ink I is sick, look a' here."

An' he jump up an' cut a double pigeon-wing, an' land on de ground right in a jig step. He t'row he foot 'bout fine, 'cause he like mighty well to dance, an' he too lub for show off. Nobody can't step it like Br' Rabbit when he want to, an' he speshly like to shame Br' Partridge, 'cause in dem days Br' Partridge legs been t'ick an' stockity so he can't dance hardly at all.

Br' Partridge watch him a minute, an' he aint like to be out-did, so he call out, "You aint goin' to dead just yet, Br' Rabbit, lessn somebody shoot you for a bird, wid all o' your high flyin' an' sky-larkin'! But you jis' res' you' foot an' work you' ears little bit, a-listenin' to dis." An' he breck out whistlin' a new chune he is jus' learned. He laid heself out, 'cause he knowed Br' Rabbit aint no more at whistlin' dan he is at dancin'.

Br' Rabbit know dat he can't wrap he tongue roun' it like Br' Partridge kin, but he ebber did mek out dat he kin do anyt'ing better'n anybody else, if he want to. So he say, "Br' Partridge, I used to whistle dat chune myself, but I disremember de name ob it."

Br' Partridge start for say, "De name is—" but

Br' Rabbit is off on somet'ing else already, an' nebber let Br' Partridge finish, 'cause he jis' keep a-talkin'.

Br' Partridge ain' mind too much, 'cause Br' Rabbit mention Br' Wolf, an' he is yeddy dat Br' Rabbit had a row wid Br' Wolf, an' he is crazy to git de straight ob it. "How you mek out at las' wid Br' Wolf?" he manage for stick in twix' Br' Rabbit's compersation. "Dem say he mos' git you dat time."

"Humph! Git me?" Br' Rabbit say, sort o' scornful. "Out o' all he done he aint git nothin' but he runnin' for he fun, an' he work for he satisfaction! I fool him, an' I fool him good! I trick him till he mos' crazy! Fus' goin' off, he lay for me, but nobody can't trap Br' Rabbit. I knowed right away whe' he been, an' I run till he seed me, an' den turn back. O' cose he tek after me, an' run me, an' I let him keep right close all de time, jis' to prove meself better'n him. Den I hide meself. I was dat close I could ha' poke' me finger right in he eye, but he didn't git me. Some day he's goin' to learn dat nobody can't find Br' Rabbit when he is hide heself!"

XXXV

"You gi' you'self a mighty good repitation, Br' Rabbit," Br' Partridge say, sort o' smilin'.

Br' Rabbit nod he head an' look mighty grave. "Man!" he say, "I is bleege to know how good I kin do dem t'ing; an' I jis' hab to gib praise accordin', enty? Hide nor seek, dey can't beat Br' Rabbit!"

Br' Partridge shut one o' he eye, an' he regard Br' Rabbit. "If you kin seek so good, must be you can catch most anybody, den?"

"Yes, suh! I aint reckin anybody roun' here, big nor little, old nor young, is smart enough to hide 'way from me an' don't git found when I search," Br' Rabbit mek answer. An' he t'row he chest out.

"You sure o' dat?"

"I is sure a-plenty!" Br' Rabbit say, an' toss he head.

"Is you dat sure you'd gib anybody a prize if you couldn't find him?"

"Who dat you talk 'bout?" Br' Rabbit ax him.

"I know somebody, if you was to promise a real good prize."

Br' Rabbit pucker up he mout', an' he scratch he ear a minute, "I wouldn't done dat exactly, but I would bet."

"How much?"

Br' Rabbit study a little bit mo', an' den he say, "Well, I tell you, I got me a whole lot o' sweet pinda (peanuts), an' would bet me a good bushel o' dem 'gainst anyt'ing as fine as dey is."

Br' Partridge lub pinda, an' he regard Br' Rabbit closer. "You willin' for bet dem pinda 'gainst a peck o' real nice bennie?" (Sesame, a seed.)

Br' Rabbit too lub bennie, an' dat been fair enough, but he say, "Taint much! How about a half-bushel?"

Br' Partridge aint got but one peck. "Well, Br' Rabbit, seein' dat you aint so *sure-'nough-sure* 'bout de t'ing I bes' be movin' along!" An' wid dat Br' Partridge mek like he is goin' to start 'way.

"Do, Br' Partridge! You is so onrestless! Cose I is sure. If I hunts de man, whoeber he may be, de bennie jis' as good as belongs to me 'fore I start out. All de same, a little peck o' bennie aint too much 'gainst a

whole bushel o' pinda. But who is de one dat been goin' to hide?"

"Tis me," Br' Partridge say, sort o' quiet-like.

"Go 'long, boy!" An' Br' Rabbit t'row back he head an' bust out laughin'. "Who teach you for hide?"

"Nemmine who. You jus' try me!"

"I ain't want to tek yo' bennie!"

"Who say you goin' to git it? Son, I kin hide good! An' I kin seek mighty good too! You ain't ketch me yet, wid all o' yo' brash talk. You best try me 'fore you say too much!"

"Well, wid all o' dem biggity word you use, which you t'ink that you is goin' to done dis day, hide, eeder-so seek?"

"Both," Br' Partridge say, right bold.

"You t'ink you is smart to dat, eh? Bery well, den. I is gwine to learn you what a smart man is right now. You go git you'self 'way from here an' hide, so I kin show you right now how quick I kin fix you!"

"Oh no, suh," Br' Partridge say, shakin' he head. "Fus' t'ing, I is goin' to fetch me bennie, an' you gots to bring dat bushel o' pinda. An' den I reckin we bes' git a jedge."

"Da's alright 'bout de bets; but what is you want wid any mo' people mix up in de business?"

"Who been goin' to watch de bennie an' de pinda while we is out in de woods? Look like somebody got to count too for share de time eben, enty? O' cose, if you is 'fraid for you' pinda, an' wants to quit right now——"

"Tchuch! Don't talk dat stupid! Me? 'Fraid! Go 'long, man! But who kin we git, for 'tend to all o' dat?"

"Sis' Nanny-Goat lib jis' middle o' de way twixt you' house an' mine, an' she's sure a settle' 'oman an' got a mighty kind heart too."

"Man, I is figger on dat one time befo'!" Br' Rabbit say, an' he look roun' at he tail. "She aint had no use for me for a long time after dat tail business. But mebbe she is forgit 'bout all dat now."

"Lemme git dere first, an' I will 'suade she."

So dey gone home for dem t'ing.

XXXVI

An' Br' Partridge git first to Sis' Nanny-Goat' house.

Sis' Nanny-Goat been sittin' in she do'way, patchin' some o' Br' Billy-Goat breeches, an' 'joyin' de wedder. She listen to all Br' Partridge tell her till he mek mention o' Br' Rabbit' name, den she say, "I is sorry, but I couldn't done de t'ing. I aint wants no mo' traffickin' wid dat triflin', no-count creeter! He been too mischiebous an' mean an' he hab too-much o' plaguin' ways."

But Br' Partridge act so polite an' decent, an' mek she feel so good till he resuade she, spite o' sheself.

"Bery well, suh, I will; only I tell you dat I wouldn't pass far from me own t'reshold so long as Br' Rabbit is 'bout. I is too 'fraid he might gone in de house an' bodder wid somet'ing. If you let me stay right here, alright."

Den Br' Rabbit come 'long luggin' he pinda, an' he so mannersable to Sis' Nanny-Goat dat she can't act mad wid he, eben if she wants. She help him an' Br' Partridge settle de bounds for hidin'. Dey 'gree to stay in de woods to de front o' Sis' Nanny-Goat' house. An' den she ax dem, "What is I gots to do?"

An' Br' Partridge tell she, "Sister, all you habs for do is jus' set here in yo' own do' an' count time, so I'll hab de same lengt' o' time to hide in as Br' Rabbit habs for hunt me. Den, when he turn comes for hide, you is to done de same for he. When de time is up you gibs we de word." Den he cock he eye aroun' at Br' Rabbit.

Br' Rabbit is a-settin' on he hams, a-squinchin' he eye at de sun. An' Br' Partridge add on, "You is to watch dat Br' Rabbit don't spy on me while I is hidin' meself."

Br' Rabbit stan' up, for mek answer but taint needful.

Sis' Nanny-Goat ain' like Br' Partridge tellin' she dat needer—what she know 'nough for do widout tellin'.

She say, "If I rule dis t'ing, I goin' to mek de two o' you play fair. But how 'bout de pinda an' de bennie?"

"Dem go to de winner. Tek care o' dem good." An' Br' Partridge t'row down he leetle poke full o' bennie in de do'-yard by Sis' Nanny-Goat' feet.

"Dis here is me pinda," say Br' Rabbit, puttin' down he crocus-bag near de bennie, "I'll lef' 'em right here handy by de bennie so I kin pick dem up all two at de same time when we is done."

"Who say dat you is goin' to hab de chance to pick dem up?" Br' Partridge ax.

"Bes' wait till you all is done 'fore eeder o' you holler," Sis' Nanny-Goat say, an' shake she head. "I aint like dis rescussion. If I jedge de game nobody but de true winner is goin' to git dem. Start de t'ing now, an' git 'long! Who is goin' to hide de first?"

Br' Partridge 'spects dat Br' Rabbit wants to, so he say quick, "I is!"

But Br' Rabbit is got he eye on Sis' Nanny-Goat, an' he ain' sputin' no mo', if he kin 'member not to.

"Alright den," Br' Partridge say, "Gi' a good shout, Sis' Nanny-Goat, when you is done dat countin', so I'll know Br' Rabbit is startin' in de woods, an' anudder when he time for findin' me is out. Or when he gibs up!"

Dat been too much for Br' Rabbit. He gots for sass back. "Nemmine 'bout dat las' t'ing," he t'row in, " 'Cause I will fetch you out o' dere long befo' dat time come."

"Hesh you' mout', an' stop you' 'sputin'!" Sis' Nanny-Goat tell 'em. "Br' Partridge, you git a-goin'. An' Br' Rabbit, turn you' face to dat house-wall, an' shut up dem leetle eye o' yourn till I tell you you kin turn roun'. Now! I goin' to count. *Kellar, Salar, Loonka, Noonka, Oonka, Lackey, Ten. . . .*"

Br' Partridge jump for de woods soon as she gib de word. He run a good distance 'fore he start searchin' a place to hide. Out dere in de warm sunshine, 'sputin' wid Br' Rabbit, he been mighty mannish, but in dese cool woods all to heself, he aint near so sure o' t'ings.

He look at two-t'ree bush an' t'ing, but dey don't seem to specify. Br' Rabbit eye might be leetle to dat, but dey too sharp to trus'! He hustle along. He is gittin' sort o' nervish.

Dat chaney briar might do, if somebody else was a-huntin' him, but Br' Rabbit would cut t'rough it wid one look.

Br' Partridge can't walk no longer. He scuttle ober to anudder part o' de woods, but nothin' don't suit him dere.

All he kin hear is dat countin', hummin' 'long like a rattle-snake tail. He start a-runnin'. He run. He look. He run, he look, till at las' he is so crazy wid de scare dat he won't find no place to suit him, dat he is hardly lookin' at all, jis' tearin' roun' an' roun' like a crazy puppy after he tail. He legs is all scratched up wid de briars, he is sweatin' like a horse, he is wore out till he can't act sensible.

He is just one ache from he waist to he toes. Ebery joint in he legs is afire, an' still he is skedaddlin' about dem woods.

He shin bones feel like de Debbil is squeezin' dem, but he yeddy Sis' Nanny-Goat, an' he kep' he legs a-movin' somehow. Dey was so sore he had to bite down ebery time he took a step, to keep from hollerin'! He couldn't run no more. He couldn't eben t'ink. De "Monkey" (exhaustion) most got him.

Jis' as luck tek it, he yeddy de count stop right den. Sis' Nanny-Goat holler out, "TIS TIME!" jus' when he been right in de middle o' a leetle clearin' all sprung up wid gall-berry, an' dem leetle runt-oak—dem what look like dey only grow in de dark o' de moon, 'cause dey mek sich a big root to grow nothin' but switches on. Dey aint eben got leaf on dem yet, an' at de fus' goin' off it don't seem like he could ha' been caught in a wuss place.

He yeddy Br' Rabbit yell out, "Lie low, Chicken, de Hawk is a-comin'!" An' all he kin do is to roll ober on he back 'mongst dem runt-oak an' scratch dead leaf ober him. He mean to git clean under, but dey aint leaf enough to cover he legs an' dey pain him so he couldn't

make dem bend. Jis' den he yeddy de bushes start a-crackin' an' he 'fraid to mek a motion. After all, dey look mighty like dem runt-oak switch, an' he straighten dem out to keep dem from tremblin'.

He got to mek dem act as if dey was bush, an' trus' to luck. If Br' Rabbit see dem he will be most glad, he so tired. Br' Rabbit come 'long jus' larkin' about, hoppin' into de tussick, an' shoutin', "Br' Partridge, come on out, 'fore I kick you out!"

But Br' Partridge jus' lie quiet.

When Br' Rabbit ain' find nothin' jumpin' 'bout like dat, he begin to poke 'bout more careful in de bushes. An' he start for hunt hard an' projick roun' dem holler tree an' t'ing, an' stretch he eye open wide for see mo' better. He is peekin' an' peerin' in dem dark places till he eye start to hurtin' him, but he aint got time to bodder 'bout dat now, 'cause Sis' Nanny-Goat keep right on countin' an' countin'. He run an' he look, he look an' he run, till he git right near where Br' Partridge is. He start to 'zamine 'bout in de bery t'icket where Br' Partridge been.

Dem two legs o' hisn feel big as two trees to po' Br' Partridge den, an' he heart mos' fail him; but jis' when it seem sho' dat he is boun' to be cotch, Br' Rabbit stop, an' stan' up. He is a-blowin' an' a-sweatin' so, he pull he bandana outn he pocket, an' fan heself a li'l bit wid de end o' it. But eben den, he still is hot, so he pull off he coat, an' start to tote it on he arm. Look like he change his mind. He eye fall on two little forkity stick stannin' up real stiff, an' dey gib him a notion, an' he hang he little coat on dem careful, so he kin find it again. Den he gone 'long, 'cause he aint got no time

to was'e. But 'fore he start searchin' de woods again, Br' Jay Bird fly ober him.

"Hey, Br' Jay Bird! Come here, will you?" say Br' Rabbit.

Br' Jay Bird lub mischief mos' as much as Br' Rabbit, an' he is one o' Br' Rabbit's good frien's. Dey always is in cahoots togedder, for mix up wid udder peoples' business. Br' Jay Bird fly down an' light on a limb.

Br' Rabbit say right sof', "I jus' want to ax you is you seen Br' Partridge 'bout here anywhere?"

But seem like Br' Jay Bird aint able to git he mind on de squestion at all. Dat spring wedder is workin' on him so strong, day in an' day out, 'stead o' screamin' "Jay! Jay! Jay! Jay!" an' mekin' heself as mean as de debbil, he aint doin' nothin' but fly roun' after de gals singin', "Coo-eee! Coo-eee! Cooo-eeee!" jis' as sweet as if he nebber did suck a egg.

An' 'fore Br' Jay kin mek answer, he yeddy somet'ing stirrin', an' he fly 'way again after de gals.

"Humph!" Br' Rabbit say to heself, "Look like I is de onliest fellow in de world dat's a-workin' dis day! I reckin eben dat low creeter is got a fremale he habs to go runnin' 'bout after."

He gone 'long a-grumblin' to heself, "Drat Br' Partridge! He fedder look same as dead leaf anyhow, an' now me eye gi' me sich a misery, wid all o' dis work he is put on dem, till I ought to hab on specks, for find him."

He peruse 'bout, an' he peruse 'bout, an' he call out, "Do, Sis' Nanny-Goat! How you kin count so fas' for me? You aint gone nigh dat fas' for Br' Partridge."

"Nothin' o' de kind," she answer him, an' Br' Rabbit gain a little time arguin' wid her.

He search till it aint look like dey is a place big enough for Br' Skeeter to hide in, let 'lone Br' Partridge, dat he aint look at or into. Dey aint a snake-hole, not so much as a anch-nest he don't stoop down for squinch into dat hard till he back an' he eye all-two is a-achin'.

He been a-workin' roun' in a big circle, an' jis' git back by de place where he coat is, when he yeddy Sis' Nanny-Goat holler, "Time up! Oonuh (you) come out o' de woods."

He tek a look around for see if Br' Partridge won't move, an' he kin 'tend like he ketch him for true. But nothin' aint stir, an' Br' Rabbit snatch up he coat, an' tek he way out o' de woods to Sis' Nanny-Goat' house.

He hardly git in de yard 'fore he yeddy somebody right behind him, an' here come Br' Partridge jis' a-grinnin'. Br' Rabbit is dat shame-faced he jis' stan' dere an' look down on de groun'.

Eben Sis' Nanny-Goat gots to smile when Br' Partridge call out to him, "Ha, Buck! You kin hunt so good, eh? I too glad you put dem pinda close to my bennie 'cause dem two is goin' to trabble de same road tonight to my house! You ain' so proudish now, is you?"

Br' Rabbit lif' up he head, but he won't look at Br' Partridge. He sort o' mumble, "I could ha' catch you long time ago if me eye aint hurt me so bad. Dey ache me now so I got to shet 'em up for res' 'em." An' he'd ha' gone on resplainin' 'bout how bad dey feel, only Br' Partridge wouldn't give him de chance.

"Da's all right, son," Br' Partridge mock him. "You needn't shet you' eye up an' 'tend you is hurt. I know dat you is blind as a groun'mole!"

"Holler good now," Br' Rabbit answer him, "Tek care you aint holler out de udder side o' you' mout' 'fore I done wid you."

"Dat'll do," say Sis' Nanny-Goat. "Mek has'e now, an' finish dis t'ing 'fore you wear me out wid all o' you' 'sputin'. Git away from here, Br' Rabbit, an' hide, if you is goin' to. Now, Br' Partridge, you come here, so I kin watch you like I done Br' Rabbit."

XXXVII

She start de count 'gain, an' Br' Partridge put he face to de wall an' shut he eye. An' dis time Br' Rabbit jump off in de woods.

Br' Rabbit been tired to deat' already, wid all o' dat huntin' he done. He figger he'll tek de fus' good place he kin find, an' stay dere. He start for a briar patch, but befo' he git dere he come on a big tussick o' saw-grass dat look jis' fine for hide in, an' in no time he mek heself a nice nest right in de middle ob it, so nobody couldn't see him 'tall. But he is dat curious, an' so onrestless, till he couldn't stay clean kibbered up dat-a-way. He habs for see what is goin' on, so he mek a peep hole jis' big enough for look out o' wid one o' he eye.

When Sis' Nanny-Goat gi' him de word, Br' Partridge start a-huntin'. He legs is still hurtin' him, but he so please' wid heself he don't pay dem no 'tention.

He scuffle roun' de woods, lookin' at all de places Br' Rabbit likely to hab choose, but he aint seen nothin'.

He knowed how Br' Rabbit lub briar-patch, an' he

gone t'rough ebery black-berry-wine in de woods. Not in swamp, nor gall, nor pocosin, broom-grass, nor muckle, is anyt'ing dat so much as look like Br' Rabbit.

He got worried a little bit, an' he gone to runnin' again, an' he passed right by a tussick o' saw-grass.

Br' Rabbit heard Br' Partridge an' popped open de eye wider'n ebber. De nex' minute he knowed his mistake, 'cause 'fore he could so much as wink it, Br' Partridge come outn de bushes dead ahead o' him, an' cotch sight o' it. Br' Rabbit froze still an' gib he eye such a nasty look dat Br' Partridge start to gone on. Den he stopped, an' say to heself, "Great Jehosophat! What a big eye! An' so mean lookin'! Anyt'ing hab eye like dat must be mighty fierce!"

But maybe de Eye might hab seen Br' Rabbit. Taint no harm to ax.

Br' Rabbit seen Br' Partridge didn't know him, an' look sewere at him. An' jis' den Br' Partridge start to speak, jis' as polite as he kin, "Mornin', Br' Big-Eye, you aint seen nobody goin' dis way?"

Br' Rabbit took a big breat'; he rumble in he chest till he teet' shook.

"NO!" he snap out, in a woice dat soun' most like Br' Wolf when he bexed.

Br' Partride lep' in de air. He wanted to run, but de beas' in de tussick aint move yet, an' he reckin he could git way if it was to jump for him.

He say, meek as a mouse, "You aint seen eben Br' Rabbit, suh?"

"ME NO SHUM!" Br' Rabbit roared out so hard dat he an' de saw-grass both shook!

Br' Partridge didn't wait for no more. He let he feets take him away from dere. Dat sure must be a dainjous

beas' in dat place! If Br' Rabbit gone dat way he is ett up by now.

Jus' den Sis' Nanny-Goat call, "TIME!", an' Br' Partridge turn an' start for de yard. He legs is dat tired an' stretch' dat he feel like he is walkin' on stilts.

When he is get dere, Sis' Nanny-Goat ax, "Whe' is Br' Rabbit? Aint you ketch him?"

Br' Partridge shake he head. "No ma'am, I aint so much as guess whe' he been."

"Humph! De two o' you mek sich a 'miration 'bout how smart you is till I t'ink I goin' for see some sport. Now look a' de way you is fail!"

XXXVIII

Jis' den Br' Rabbit come out de woods, jis' a-peltin', like he ain' nebber been tired at all, an' he aint wait for git close 'fore he call out, "De ole man fool you dat time, enty, Br' Partridge?"

"If you'd ha' stayed in dem woods, like you promise, I'd ha' found you," Br' Partridge complain.

"How come you tek so much o' 'tority, to say I aint been dere? I kin prove out o' you' own mout' I been in de woods. You 'member dat somet'in-anurrah you call Big-Eye, an' hab de busumption for squizzit 'bout me till you git scared an' run 'way? Twas me!"

Br' Partridge cry out, "Do, Sis' Nanny-Goat! Look a' de way Br' Rabbit' eye stan'! Dem aint been dat way dis mornin'!"

"No, bubbuh," she say, "dey sho' aint. You mek him work dat hard till he eye is all pop'! An' what's mo', dey ain' jus' swole up for *now!* Dey is goin' for *stay* pop! Ha-ha-ha!"

Br' Rabbit been too bex at she for laughin' at

him, an' he turn quick on Br' Partridge an' say, "You try for 'scuse you'self, by dat! You say I aint stay in de woods. Mebbe you t'ink I aint stay like I promise, 'cause you'self ain' stay dere like you promise!"

"Tain' so! I been dere all de time. You been dat close to me one time I could ha' kicked you right in de stumick. 'Member when you tek you' coat off an' hang it up on dem two forkity stick? Dat's when! Dem been me two leg', wid me two foots 'pon-top o' dem, dat you tek for stick."

"No, suh! Dat can't be. Dem stick ain' no size at all —jis' switches. Yo' stockity little leg nebber look like dat."

"If you ain' want to b'liebe me, look 'pon dem now!" An' Br' Partridge lean back, an' poke out he leg.

Sis' Nanny-Goat bus' out laughin' den till it seem like she nebber goin' to stop, but when she git she breat' she say, "Sho' 'nough, dey is little as stick, an' twice as long as dey been befo'. You is all-two dat greedy dat you' shape gotta 'commodate heself to suit you' appetite!"

"Taint no fair!" cry out Br' Rabbit, " 'cause Br' Partridge done change he leg!"

"Yes, an' who change he eye, an' he woice, too?" holler Br' Partridge.

"I is win. You ain' find me!" say Br' Rabbit, an' try for pick up de bennie.

Br' Partridge fly in he face. "Don't you dare to tetch dat bennie. I win, me own-self! You ain' find me!"

Br' Rabbit turn away an' shet he eye real tight to protect dem, but he holler, "You know I win de las', Sis' Nanny-Goat!"

"You know I win de fus', Sis' Nanny-Goat!" Br' Partridge call back.

XXXIX

But she ain' dere no mo'!

"Hi, Br' Partridge! Sis' Nanny-Goat is gone!"

Br' Partridge look an' squeal out, "Whe' is de bennie an' de pinda? Mus' be she tek dem in she own house—de do' is shet!"

"Sis' Nanny-Goat!" dey is cry out loud, togedder.

Sis' Nanny-Goat put she head out de window. "You is too smart, you is! Needer head o' you is win!"

Br' Partridge an' Br' Rabbit look hard at each udder, an' den Br' Rabbit cry out, "Gimme me pinda!"

An' Br' Partridge he cry out, "Gimme me bennie!"

"No, suh!" Sis' Nanny-Goat tell 'em. "You is all-two los' de prize. I is to jedge de game an' gi' de prize to de winner. Nobody ain' won, so I keep de prize for me trouble. Good day to you both!" An' she draw back in de house till dey can't see she no mo'.

Den Br' Rabbit an' Br' Partridge raise a mighty rookus! An' dey beat on de do', to git in, or scare she, an' mek she come out.

For a long time Sis' Nanny-Goat let 'em go on, but den she stick she head outn de window again, an' tell 'em, "Shoo! Taint no use you two fussin' roun' here no mo'. Git 'way from here. *Shoo!*"

Br' Partridge beg, "Please gimme me bennie, Sis' Nanny-Goat? I ain't t'ink you kin do me like dat."

"Br' Partridge," say Sis' Nanny-Goat, "I used to t'ink better o' you. If you play roun' wid Br' Rabbit de way you is doin', an' go on de way you is goin', you is sho' to come to a bad end."

Br' Rabbit speak up den in a sof' woice he is save for de time when he been in de wust o' bad fixes. "Oh, Sis' Nanny-Goat, we is count on you an' trus' you for help us out. You sholy ain' goin' to disap'pint we!"

"I 'spose you 'spec's me for be kin'-heart, Br' Rabbit! I ebber try for do de bes' I kin, but dis time taint no use for you to try for git roun' me or 'suade me. You can't nebber fool me again. Dis is de one time when de luck lie my way, an' mebbe twill teach you some manners, if dis day I git mo' dan my trouble for my pains. Now I has had enough o' confusion. Git 'way from here, all-two! Clear out!"

Dem want to stay for beg some mo', but Sis' Nanny-Goat holler out, "Ki! I yeddy Br' Billy-Goat a-comin'! An' he'll sho' tend to you proper for bodderin' he wife. You git change' enough wid you' eye, an' you' leg, dis day, but if you won't git out o' dis yard befo' Br' Billy-Goat come here, he is sho' goin' to put dat hard head o' he-own to you an' *boock* you till you is change a whole lot mo'!"

An' Br' Rabbit an' Br' Partridge git a-goin' den. Dey learn a lesson 'bout Sis' Nanny-Goat dat day, an' dey leg an' dey eye 'mind 'em of it good ebber since.

IX

DE SECON' SIN

DE SECON' SIN

XL Adversity oppresseth the first family. XLI Dissension between the brothers XLII A portent and their offering; XLIII two interpretations of an omen. XLIV The first death. XLV God's curse on Cain.

XL

Trouble come to Adam an' Ebe—trouble an' hebby tribulation.

When Cain an' Abel been 'bout growed up, dey ain' hardly no rain one winter, an' de spring start out dry. From de time Whip-poor-Will call time for plantin', Adam an' Cain been busy in de fiel', but day-in, day-out, not a drop o' water come on de lan'. De seed don't come up good. De sky been blue all de day an' clear all de night. Adam an' Cain plant agin, but dey aint come eben a sign o' mos' o' de seed, needer corn, nor cotton, nor 'tater. Dey work an' dey work, but de sun jus' shine an' shine in de sky, and de rain hol' back. Look like de curse o' work bear down on de fambly mo' harder dan ebber, an' trouble keep a-comin'. 'Tis de drout'. De dry drout'.

Adam an' Cain kep' at it, bes' dey kin, to mek a crop, but mighty soon in de year de corn seed an' t'ing been mos' used up, an' what little corn mek out, spite o' de dry wedder, been yaller an' spindly. An' de warmint an' t'ing nebber been worse: crow been at it all de day an' cutworm all de night. Seem like de whole creation is agin 'em. Eberyt'ing gone wrong. Dey two git de worst ob it, for true, but taint easy on Ebe, nor Abel, needer.

Aint too much water in de well, an' Ebe habs to go easy on it; so little dere dat dey gots to fetch water a distance to boil de clo'es. An' Abel, tekin' care o' de creeter, find dat de grass been like de corn—dey aint a good stan'. Eben 'fore de summer gits a-goin' he habs for hunt pasture for he stock. Eberyt'ing need water, an' eberybody work is harder. But taint de work what bodder Ebe an' Abel de mos'—dey 'customed to dat. Tis de grumblin'. Adam an' Cain jus' grumble, an' grumble, an' done nothin' but grumble.

Adam say to Ebe, "God say, 'By yo' sweat you will eat bread.' I sweats, an' I ought to get de bread."

"Man! Shet yo' mout'. An' don't say sich a t'ing. You got sin, to talk dat way," Ebe tell him. "Tek care you don't bex de Lord till you fetch mo' trouble on we."

But Adam keep a-grumblin'. He cas' his eye up at de sky. Aint eben a bit o' cloud, an' he jus' groan out, "'Fore God, aint it nebber gwine rain?"

"You'd best pray God to forgib you, an' lif' de drout', 'stead o' talkin' like dat," Ebe say back. 'Cause Ebe got to be a prayin' kind o' 'oman ebber since dey been put out o' de garden. From dat time, 'fore she done mos' anyt'ing at all, she got to projeck roun' wid de notion till she kin mek up she mind whedder God goin' to like it or not.

But Adam ain' answer she. He jis' turn roun' an' walk back to de fiel', but it seem like he feets been hebby.

An' Cain been wuss dan Adam. He Pa an' he Ma been used to trouble, but he an' Abel aint nebber yet seen a hebby tribulation. Cain is mighty short-patienced an' sort o' bull-head. He is cussin' at sometin'

all de time—at de sun, an' de corn-seed, an' de crow, an' de cut-worm, an' de warmint, an' as de drout' git worser he mos' cuss at God heself for lettin' de rain hold up dat long.

XLI

Twould ha' been bad enough, if Cain had stop wid cussin' at dem t'ing—but he gots to fuss wid he brudder on top o' all dat. Cain an' Abel aint nebber had de same mind about anyt'ing. Eben in de best o' times dey don't git on too well. Cain lub de groun' an' he beliebe tis made for de crop. Abel lub de stock an' twould suit him to hab nuttin' but pasture eberywhere for de creeter. Cain sweat in de fiel', an' he t'ink he brudder spend he time restin' under de cool shady trees watchin' de cow, an' sheep, an' all, bite grass. Abel know well de trouble he got to keep his eye on all dose creeter all de time an' perteck dem. An' after all he don't see dat he Pa an' Cain mek so much wid dey crop, wid all dey labor an' fussin'. Den, too, Abel was a prayin' man from he Ma's raisin', an' don't fuss much; but Cain could see by de way he ack how he felt. An' jis' de way he'd keep quiet used to make Cain de more bexed.

From de beginnin', plantin mens, an' dem wid creeters couldn't git along. An' now wid de drout', de dry-drout', an' de summer settin' in, eberybody is short patienced. Adam an' Ebe is all de time 'sputin', an' Cain pick on Abel so dat he eben got him to fightin' back, takin' sides wid dey Pa an' Ma. If de drout' won't fetch along a crop, it sho' will bring trouble an' quarrelin'. An' de sun jus' shine, an' shine, an' burn on an' burn on, till de well gone most to mud, an' de fiel'

is dry as tinder, an' de grass is all straw. Dey aint eben so much as a good jew on de groun' in de mornin'.

Den Abel 'gin to hab trouble for true, findin' pasture. He foller he creeter an' he drive 'em about huntin' for whe' de grass might be better. He trabble, an' he trabble, till he come in at night wid he foots jis' a-draggin' in de dust, from de pure tired. Ebe seen dat; an' Adam ketch she one day, tekin' a few ear o' de leetle corn what been lef' in de corn-house, for help out Abel' stock.

Adam bexed. He tell she, " 'Oman, you got no sense! Don't you feed any mo' o' dat to de creeter. 'Fore you know it, we-self 'll go hongry for bread."

Ebe say back, "If Stepney gwine git we, dem leetle nubbin' o' corn ain' goin' for save we. You an' Cain bring de curse o' drout' on we already, wid yo' sin. De way for git help is to pray. You bes' start prayin' right now, an' pray stiddy till de Lord hear you."

"Prayin' ain' goin' to break dis here drout'. Dat is jis' anudder one o' yo' fool notions. When dis drout' git ready, he goin' for break heself. Cain an' me ain' hab no mo' o' sin dan Abel an' you, needer, an' taint doin' no good for you, all-two, for set yo'self up to be better'n we."

Ebe didn't mek him no answer, but she start a-prayin' to she-self, an' beg God, an' beg God, for rain.

An' Adam been jis' a-goin' back to de fiel' when Cain bus' in de do', an' holler out, "Dem creeter ought to be killt. Dey gone an' break dey way into de fiel' an' been eatin' at we crop'. If I hadn't ha' foun' dem we'd had none lef'."

An' Abel speak up. "Better de creeter eat it dan de

sun jus' burn it up. Den if we aint got bread, leastways we got meat."

Cain' face stan' like a t'under cloud, he been dat mad, an' he start for Abel to hit him, only Adam git betwix', an' stop dem.

No change come, 'cepn de well dried clean up. All de time de drout' gittin' dryer an' dryer, an' ebery-t'ing turnin' to dus'. All de lan' Adam an' Cain turn' up an' work so good, aint nothin' at las' but de pure dus'. Dus'—food for de Sarpint, 'cordin' to de Lord's Word. Cloud o' dus' ebery which way. When a wind fetch across a field, look like de whole top o' de eart' is trab-blind wid it. De house fill wid dus'. De bittle kibber wid dus'. Nothin' but dus' to breathe, an' dus' to eat. An' de worst o' it been, dat Sarpint ration set a man to be like a Sarpint.

De mo' de t'ing gone on, de mo' dey ain' got an idea whaffor do. Only Ebe. She been at de res' de enjurin' time to pray, pray, pray, till Adam an' Cain can't find any peace in de house. Dey doin' what dey kin in de fiel' to save a piece o' de crop—but what kin a man do in a dry drout'? An' Abel doin' he best to find pasture for de creeter, but it look like dey aint no grass left. An' fly an' t'ing breed fas' in de hot wedder an' pester dem nigh to deat'. An' Abel eben gots trouble for water de stock, 'cause all de branch dry clean up, an' he gots for tek 'em to de ribber; an' dat's so low de fish is a-perishin' in de mud. An' when Abel seen de creeter gittin' so lean an' po', he git 'stressed ober dey misery till he can't be like heself no mo', an' don't talk to no-body. He come home at night an' find Ebe a-prayin' for de rain, an' widout she eben ax him, he join right

in. An' dat mek it all de worse for Cain an' Adam, what won't gib in.

Adam see dat Abel is in trouble, but Cain don't care 'bout dat, an' anyways Cain mos' gone crazy wid de heat, an' de dus', an' de work, an' de bodder. An' at las' one night he can't stan' it no longer. When he seen Ebe an' Abel a-prayin', he bus' right in on it, an' jus' yell at 'em, "Great-God-a-mighty! I aint goin' to pray if it nebber do rain."

"Do, Maussuh, don't listen to dat sinful word," Ebe call out loud.

Cain say, "Alright den, pray for me if you want to. But I ain' goin' to be like Abel. I aint habs for call on de Lord. I teks care o' meself!" An' he slam out o' de house.

An' Adam gone after him, but mighty slow.

Ebe been jis' about outdone wid dem. Dey won't repent a bit o' dey cussin' an' hard-heart. She try to mek up for it so t'ings won't git wuss. But tis a trial an' a tribulation. Eben she fowl git sick wid de cholera an' die. Dey ain't a breat' o' air for days, an' when dey was a cloud twould drif' over like it been nothin' but a puff o' white smoke, mockin' at dem, dry an' hot and wort'less. An' when de wind come sweepin' back, it blow like it come over a fire an' swinge de leaf, an' roll up de dus', and burn dey t'roat. Dry drout'! De dry drout'! Nobody can speak or t'ink nothin' else. Seem like all Cain an' Adam kin do is stan' roun' an' search de Hebbens for sign o' rain, an' say, one or anudder, "Great Master! Ain' rain nebber a-comin'?"

Ebe can't help but yeddy 'em, an' at las' she say, "Taint no use you complainin'. You got to ax God for

forgibness, an' we gots to gi' God a gif', for satisfy him. Time, an' past de time, for done dat t'ing."

Dat bex Cain bad, but Adam 'gin to t'ink mebbe de 'oman been right. But count o' dat Sarpint food he been eatin', he jis' habs for 'spute wid she.

"What is we got dat been fitten to gi' God? Taint no use, noways. He hab de whole worl' already, enty?"

"Gi' what you hab, matters not what," Ebe tell him. "De Lord goin' to understand."

XLII

Adam been studyin' 'bout dat, an' studyin', when all ob a sudden Cain cry out, "Lord! Look at dat cloud!"

An' sho' 'nough, ober to one side come a big t'under-head, jis' boilin' up de sky—black, an' wet-lookin', an' full o' t'under an' lightnin'. Dey could mos' smell de sweet rain, an' dey forgit all about dey fightin', an' gone to huntin' for pan, an' tub, an' piggin, to ketch it.

De cloud rolled up clean across de sky till de sun gone out. De wind come up like smoke from a woods afire. Adam reckined de rain would follow, an' dey got ready to go in de house outn de wedder. It got darker an' darker; an' ebery t'ing

seemed to be holdin' its breat', waitin' for de storm to break. Eben de t'under held up in de clouds. Den at last dey was a cool breat' o' wind and some big drops started to fallin', *Phut! Phut!* scarrin' de dust.

Adam say to de res', "Tenk God here is de true rain come at las'." An' dey stood dere full o' happiness, tastin' de good air.

But, as he said it, dere came a crackle o' chain-lightnin' close by dem, an' a great roll o' t'under dat made de cold sweat break out on dem.

No more drops o' rain fell. De storm drove off t'underin', an' took all dey hope wid it. Ebery t'ing is dry as before, an' when dey got a chance to look round, de lightnin' had ruined de only good patch o' corn dey had lef'.

Dat t'ing scared Adam sick.

Ebe say, "Man! Dat been God's finger, pointin' at yo' sin."

Adam jis' groan like he got a misery. De sky is gittin' blue again.

Ebe keep at him. "Adam, we gots to pray, all o' we."

Dat time Adam gib in at las'. An' so did Cain, only he dat stiff-neck he ain't gib out dat he done so.

Den Ebe tell 'em, "Now we goin' to gi' God dat gif'."

An' she an' Abel kill a lamb, an' Adam an' Cain git some o' de las' little nubbin o' corn dat it lef' to put wid it for dey offerin'. An den Ebe an' Abel pick out de bes' place in de yard, under a high tree, an' dey all bring dey t'ing dere.

An' Ebe lead de prayin' an' dat day dey prayed right, beggin' God to send de rain. An' Abel pray too. When Abel git done, dark is ketch 'em, an' Cain an' Adam

gone in de house, but Ebe an' Abel kep' up de t'ing till way in de night. An' while God ain't gib 'em a sign, 'fore dey come in, dey been suttin dat Heself goin' come befo' day in de mornin'.

XLIII

Fus' t'ing when she git up, Ebe run out for see did God come. When she git to de place she stop stock still, an' den she yell out at de top o' she voice, "Glory be! Glory be! De Lord been here! De Lord been a-come!" An' she went to find Adam.

Abel an' Cain come a-runnin'. An' Abel say, "But look! God only took de meat. He ain' tetch de corn."

An' den Cain hate he brudder for true. "Tchuh!" he say, "Taint de Lord what been here. Tis jus' a varmint come an' nyam yo' gif'. Look in de dus' if dat aint a track!"

"Dat aint no track," Abel answer him. "No warmint couldn't tek dat carcass ober de fench, an' dey aint eben de bones lef'. Tis de Lord what tek dat gif', an' you hab sin again for not believin'. God tek de meat an' lef' de corn to gi' a sign to we. He notice dem dat please him, an' rejeck de offerin' o' de unrighteous."

An' 'fore Cain kin answer Abel shet he eyes an' gone to prayin' some to God, "Pay no 'tention to sinners, till dey repent, Lord. But send rain an' help to de fait'ful an' all de po' creeter. An' forgib me brudder he hard heart. Amen, Lord."

Cain suck he teet'. He set eye on Abel an' say, slow an' hard, "How you dare to put sich a name on yo' Pa an' you brudder before God?"

"God knowed you good. Dat's w'y he wouldn't tek yo' bittle."

"How you kin tell—so mighty good—what God know an' do?" Cain ask, holdin' he breat'.

"I stan' mo' like him dan you does!" Abel holler back.

Cain can't hol' heself no longer. He start at Abel for lick him.

Abel lif' up he han' to refen' heself.

Cain grab up a piece o' wood, an' struck down on him. Jis' once. On de temple.

Abel fell down at Cain feet, an' nebber move.

XLIV

Cain git scared at de quiet way Abel been a-lyin' dere.

Den, 'way off in de distance, de t'under roll—like somet'in' a-comin'.

Cain still mad, but he git mo' scared. He try for t'ink Abel mus' be foolin'.

De t'under roll again, comin' closer an' closer, an' de sky turn black.

Cain look down 'pon he brudder, an' all at once he seen dat de blood was oozin' in de dus' whe' Abel's head was broke in, an' he knowed de man was dead. An' de fear shook him.

De t'under rolled out once more, loud an' close.

Adam an' Ebe come out o' de house, jis' a-shoutin' dat God is sendin' a rain at las'.

Dey git most to Cain, when a crack o' lightnin' run clean roun' de hebbens.

An, dere is God Heself walkin' in de storm towards Cain.

XLV

When Adam an' Ebe see God, dey aint kin say a word, an' Cain been tarrify till tis de mos' he kin do to stan' on he feet.

God stop befo' Cain, an' it seem like de storm hol' back. He look in Cain face, an' he ax him, "What is you got to say, 'bout yo' brudder?"

Cain can't tek he eye off de groun', but he been stubborn eben den. He stick he mout' out, an' mek answer, "He is a man, enty? Is I got to tek care o' him?"

"You kill him—an' you ax me dat?"

Ebe scream out den, an' run to Abel. She reach down for lif' him up, but when she see he head, she call 'pon God. "Lord, don't let Cain lib. He done dis t'ing. Don't let him lib, Lord!"

Adam say, "Hesh, 'oman! Tis better to do wid one son dan hab none. Hesh!"

Den Ebe aint called on God no mo', but jis' t'row sheself down in de dus' by Abel, an' cry an' moan, an' cry an' moan.

God study Cain a-standin' dere before Him, lookin' at de groun' wid he head hung down. An' he said right slow, "Yo' brudder' blood is in de groun'—an' dat will curse de lan' for you as long as you lib, so dat you kin nebber git de strength out o' it again. But you got to punish mo' dan dat. An' you got to stan' it by yo'self—ebery creeter on de yearth got to know yo' sin! An' I is goin' to drive you forth out o' dis land."

Den Cain cried out, "Don't drive me out, Lord! De beas' will destroy me!"

God look at him. Den he look at Adam standin' dere,

all broke up wid he trouble. An' den at Ebe lyin' in de dus' wid de dead man. An' he say to Cain, as if he weren't nothin', "No. Murder is de second sin! You is got to go. But you shan't die o' yo' punishment, 'cause I'll put a mark on you so dat nothin' will touch you till yo' full time is come!" An' God reached forward wid he finger an' marked Cain on de forehead, an' said to him, "Go on your way."

When God said dose words de storm broke loose again, an' come right down on Cain. An' Cain was picked right up an' carried befo' it, de t'under jis' a rollin', de lightnin' forkin' like a great tree strikin' down, an' dat harricane o' wind a-tearin' an' a-screechin' behind him.

An' Adam jus' moaned, "O Lord, both o' me sons is gone now." An' he t'rowed heself down on de ground by Ebe.

God stan' by an' look at dem till de storm blowed away. An' den he lifted dem up an' comforted dem, an' told 'em, "Bury yo' dead now, an' stop yo' mournin', 'cause I goin' to sen' a rain to help you out o' yo' trouble."

An' Adam dig de grabe an' done what God told him. An' den come a great rain on de earth dat filled up all de stream, an' set de crop to growin'.

An' de storm washed out de dead man tracks so good till he ghost rest easy an' nebber came back to bodder dem.

X

CAIN AN' HE GOIN'S-ON

CAIN AN' HE GOIN'S-ON

XLVI Cain's journey. XLVII He exploreth in the Land of Nod. XLVIII Cain findeth a wife. XLIX Adam and Eve discover at once the origin of species and the race problem.

XLVI

When de storm came down on Cain after God cuss him out for killin' he brudder, dat boy aint nebber able for know jis' what happen. Dat harricane suttinly didn't wait on him. Cain can't trabble fas' enough on he two feets to suit dat wind, an' it pick him clean up offn de groun' an' carry him up in de element. He been scairt till he ain't got a bit o' sense lef'. De t'under kep' a-rollin' an' soun' like God heself tellin' him to git 'way. An' dat t'ing is all Cain want to do, for a fack.

But wind an' t'under aint all. De lightnin' kep' a-spittin' an' a-spittin' down right back o' him like a black-snake whip a-poppin' at he haunches, till he tucked he feet up onderneat' him like a bird, an' turn dis way an' dat way to git out o' reach o' it. An' de storm kep' him jis' a-spinnin' an' a-spinnin' 'long, till de way he been goin' don't seem like de harricane kin keep up wid him. One time look like he gots for stop heself for git he breat', but dat lightnin' snap right behind him again, an' a big ball o' fire, mo' bigger dan a punkin', roll under him. An' Cain git he secon' wind right den, an' he jis' natchally riz up an' kep' a-goin'. An' he trabble, an' he trabble t'rough de element for sich a lengt' o' time till he gone a mighty distance.

XLVII

Den dat storm drawed off, an' let Cain down to de groun'. An' when he look roun' he been in a strange country, for true, nothin' but red mud an' red ribber an' jibbucrew (low brush), an' not so much as a lightwood stump for to git a little kindlin' to mek fire wid. Twas de Land o' Nod, an' it weren't no place dat deestent people would ha' want to lib in, but, when dat wind an' all lef' him dere, he been dat done-out he don't know whaffor do. So he jis' gone to sleep. An' when he wake up he bones still ache him too much for gone furder, an' he too scared to turn back. So whe' he was, dat is whe' he stayed.

Look like he goin' to hab a sweet time to git sometin' to eat, but turreckly he find some coky-nut an' banana an' t'ing for nyam. De fus' goin' off he ain' like dem kind o' bittle too good, but he seen he kin mek out wid them till mebbe he kin do better. So for a long time he jus' kind o' gone roun' an' gone roun' an' when he ain' gone roun' he gone 'sleep.

But taint long till what trouble Cain mos' is de lonesome; he lonesome all de time; he lonesome till he'd

ha' been glad eben to git some o' de creeter o' Bubbuh Abel for company. Little use as he hab for dat Guinea-Fowl, he'd ha' been too glad to git dat creeter roun' for pass him a word o' compersation, or jis' to t'row a cuss at now an' again. So all de time he gone about, he been lookin' for some kind o' t'ing to 'sociate wid, but dem kind o' creeter he kin see been so ongodly outlandish lookin' till Cain been 'fraid o' so much as come nigh 'em, eben de nyoung ones. He try for act bol'. He feel dat mark on he forehead an' he 'member what God say, but 'spite o' dat he heart mos' fail him when he hear 'em so much as sneeze.

Nebberdeless, he aint gin up lookin' for company, an' at las' one day he seem to run on luck. He gone huntin' heself some dem cokynut for he bittle, an' he yeddy somet'in'. Sure soun' like people talkin'. He gone dat way fast as he could, but whoeber it was must hab heard him comin', 'cause dey run 'way jis' as he was gittin' close to dem, an' mos' all he kin see is dat dey look like folks, only dey mighty black an' hairy. One o' dem—an' it seem like it was a gal—turn' roun' an' tek a look his way jis' as de res' run off. An' Cain like de gal's looks. He t'ink she seen him, too, but some o' de old ones hollered at her jis' den, an' she turn an' gone.

Dat set Cain to studyin', an' to huntin' all t'rough dat part o' de country for a sight o' dose people again. Next time he yeddy dem, he gone easy—creepin' up on whe' dey was—an' dey was makin' sich a racket dey couldn't seem to hear him.

Cain git right up on dem dis time, an' had a chance to see dem an' harkin good to dey talk. Dey black, an'

dey hairy as a parcel o' goats, an' dey talkin' some curious Geechey lingo he nebber heard de like of—different from de talk o' he Pa an' Ma, like some dem Nyankee, an' people down Sawannah-way talk different from de turrah buckra. Cain can't onderstand dem.

Den he seen de gal—an' seem like she is lookin' for somet'in'. Ebery now an' den she stop an' look all roun' in de woods as if she is 'spectin' to see somebody comin'. Cain git de notion tis he she is watchin' for, an' when she look ober by whe' he is, he stick he head up real easy, so de gal kin jis' see him.

She turn she face away—but she aint mek no racket to scare de rest.

Cain kep' a-watchin' close, an' de gal look back. An' dis time he try to look at her as sweet as a sugar-plum, but de gal 'tend like she mad. Nebberdeless she cut she eye roun' in a minute to see if he is still dere, an' when she find out he is, she mek a face at him.

Jis' den one old man seen him dere in de bush, an' he let out a big whoop, an' t'rowed a cokynut right at Cain head. Cain ducked, an' when he looked again de whole gang had gone a-runnin'. An' after dat it seemed like dey moved out altogedder, 'cause hunt as best he kin, Cain can't see hide nor hair o' dem.

He search an' he search till at last he git downhearted, an' low in he mind. An' he start to plant a patch o' land jis' to tek he mind off he trouble. He work dat place hard, an' he build him a house an' all. He figger he best fix heself as good as he kin 'cause dey ain' no way o' tellin' what's a-comin'.

Jis' like de Lord tell him he aint had too much o' luck wid de lan' but all de same he satisfied to mek

some sort o' crop an' don't hab to eat dem raw coky-nuts an' t'ing de rest o' his life.

XLVIII

Den one day he been out in de fiel' a-hoein', an' he blind-God tol' him to look roun'. An' dere at de side o' de clearin', in a tree, is dat nyoung gal, a-watchin' him stiddy.

When she seen him lookin', she gone. But Cain aint make a move to chase she—jis' gone on an' tend to he work, but keep a-listenin' good all de time. An' turreckly he knowed she was back. Dis time, he cut he eye roun' careful. Seem like she is tekin' a big int'res' in he work. He gone on hoein' awhile, an' den he hit on a notion. He stuck he hoe in de groun' an' gone off into de house. He git some yam an' t'ing he had all cooked for he dinner, an' fix 'em on a clean piece o' bark, an' started out wid dem. If he kin, he is goin' to 'tice dat gal to stay roun' dere, an' at least mek some company for him. An' he knowed from watchin' he Ma dat 'oman too lub strange bittle, an' he hoped, if he learn dat gal to eat dem nice an' cooked, he might tame she. But when Cain start out de door he mos' drop de bittle, 'cause dere is de gal in de fiel', tryin' to hoe de crop. She drop de hoe an' run when she seen him. But Cain like dat gal all de mo' 'cause he seen right den she had de makin's o' a real good hoe-hand.

But de gal didn't come back. An' dat night Cain had to eat dem col' yam heself, to keep dem from wastin'.

She aint come de nex' day or de nex', an' Cain is gittin' all broke up, when one day dere she is again! He couldn't git in de house fast enough for some 'tater

outn de ashes an' some meat outn de skillet. An' den he try for work up towards de gal slow, an' gi' 'em to she. She run right off an' lef' him, but Cain got de notion she aint gone far. So den he set out de bittle nice as he kin under de tree close by, an' tek up he hoe again.

Sho' 'nough, bye an' bye de gal come back, an' she look fust at de bittle an' den at him. Cain mek out dat he aint been lookin', but he kin see right good out de corner o' he eye what she been doin'.

She kin smell dem bittle, an' she slip down an' gone to 'em. She sniff 'em an' she tas'e a leetle bit, an' den she set right down an' don't pay no 'tention to nothin' till she mek a big cleanin' up o' all o' de mess.

An' when she is finish an' feelin' right good, Cain try a little sweet-mout' talk at she, an' she don't act bex at all. She aint mek no face at him, but jis' kind o' grin, an' twis' she head ober, an' tee-hee! An' Cain forgit all about how hairy an' black she is. He git pure fool about de gal but when he try for git close to she, she aint let him. She run again. But after dat she aint miss a day comin' for she dinner. Cain'd let she watch him a while an' den he'd gone into de house to git de bittle. De gal'd ketch up de hoe, an' Cain'd be slow a-puppose, for let she spell him wid de work.

Git so 'fore long dat jis' from watchin' him, she knowed good what to do, an' Cain was more dan ebber satisfied. But she aint nebber work long. If he aint come, she t'row down de hoe, an' mek like mebbe she go 'way. Den Cain bring out she dinner, an' while she eat de bittle he talk sweetmout' talk at she, for git she used to him. If he talk sensible she kin nebber under-

stan' him, so he's got for talk sweetmout' all de time, an' he aint had no practice in dat, but yet it seemed to come easy. Den she'd fool roun', an' sassy him, an' 'tice him till Cain is jis' natchally mos' crazy, an' will done anyt'ing for mek she feel good. An' when she kep' on a-comin', Cain say to heself, "Son, you is feedin' dis gal. You learn she for hoe, an' all. Why aint you ketch 'em now, an' marry em?" Dat aint so hard for say, but tis hard for do.

Dat bery time, mus' be dat de gal' Ma find out what is goin' on. One day after Cain gi' de gal she bittle, he gone back to de house a minute an' he yeddy de debbil break loose in de fiel'. He drop eberyt'ing to look-see.

Dere de ol' lady is in de middle o' de corn patch, wid her mout' full, an' a sweet 'tater in she hand, an' de gal tryin' to git it away from her. De ol' lady is twixt de gal an' de house, an' trying to run she off de place. An' de gal wouldn't gone. An' she Ma scold she, an' cuss she, an' de nex' t'ing dey is tearin' wool outn one an-udder an' mekin' a fine mess o' dat corn patch at de same time.

Cain git up on 'em 'fore de ol' lady seen him, an' he git in two-

t'ree good lick on she wid de hoe-han'le 'fore she turn loose de gal. She start for mek track, an' she cuss at Cain scan'lous. As she gone by de 'tater she drap while she been fightin', she try for pick it up.

Tis hard enough courtin' a gal, an' feedin' she de enjurin' time, widout habin' she family cuss you an' eat you' bittle too! Cain yell out, "Ol' lady, you had bes' not come back here wid none o' yo' nonsense. If you does, I'll put sich anudder lickin' on you dat you'll be too busy mendin' up yo' carcass to do any mo' o' yo' meddlin'!"

Den he turn back to de gal. She start for gone too, but she aint run too fas'. She dodge 'bout a little bit, but she aint climb no tree. An' finally at las', Cain mek a grab an' ketch she.

Cose de gal fight. She scratch a little bit, an' bite a little bit—jis' like she had ought to, to be respectubble—but Cain bring dat gal to he han' good. What wid he mout' full o' sweet talk, an' she mout' full o' sweet 'tater, he git dat gal for a wife den an' dere. Taint no time befo' dey been a settle married couple. Dey hab peace. Leas'wise, dey only fights one annurrer.

XLIX

People an' t'ing don't trabble 'bout so fas' in dem days as dey does now, an' Adam an' Ebe ain' yeddy nothin' 'bout Cain for a matter o' years. Den de Sarpint, what tote all de news in de worl', 'specially if he t'ink tis bad, pick up de story 'bout Cain an' he gone right off to find Adam. Since dat time in de garden, de Sarpint ebber was afraid o' what Ebe might done to him, so he don't gone nigh de house, but he seen Adam out

workin' in de fiel'. An' de Sarpint slip up an' tell him 'bout Cain, libin' way down de country, an' married to a monkey-baboon gal.

Adam drop he work, an' run to de house, an' holler, "Ol' lady, I got word o' Cain!"

"What dat boy done now?" Ebe answer, tryin' for mek out like she ain' care. But she come right in from de kitchen.

"Dem say he is married."

"Who de debbil in dis worl' kin de boy be married to? Answer me dat!"

Adam aint want for tell de 'oman all he knowed; he scared she'll tek on too much, an' mightn't gone wid him to see Cain. So he jis' tell she, "Tis some kind o' 'oman from de Land o' Nod."

"How long dey been married?"

"I ain' know."

Ebe aint like Adam to fetch de news to she—she always want to fetch dat sheself. "What dey been doin'?"

"I don't know dat eeder."

"Tchuh! You nebber know nothin' 'bout nothin'! Who fetch de word?"

Adam aint wants for tell she dat tis de Sarpint, so he jis' says, "Matters not who tell me. I hear it!"

But Ebe ain' listen, 'cause she been t'ink 'bout somet'in' else. "Well, I reckin we kin start tomorrow."

An' Adam say, stupid-like, "Start to whe'?"

"Whe'! Whe' but to see Cain? Aint you wants for see you' own son, let alone you' new daughty-in-law?"

Dey can't start too soon for Adam, but he mek out like he don't want to gone right den 'cause he say dem ought to stay by de crop. An' o' cose dat settle de

t'ing 'cause den Ebe boun' for carry him right now. An' de nex' mornin' before fowl-crow she had him up, a-fixin' for de trip. Dem ties up de stuff dey goin' to carry an' las' t'ing Ebe fill a hankcher full o' nicky-nyack an' horse-gunjur (ginger-bread horses) an' t'ing, an', when Adam ax she why she done dat, she aint gi' him no answer. Den dey took de pat' an' gone 'long.

Twas a long distance too, an' it sho' mus' ha' been de will o' God dat dey should git dere at all, 'cause dey ain' got no storm for carry 'em, like Cain hab, an' what he done in one day tek dem many a day an' mo'.

But dem git dere at las', an' come 'pon Cain' self out by de barn. An' he sho' was supprise to see 'em, an' after dem say "Howdy," an' mek a 'miration 'bout bein' glad, an' so on, Cain start for tell 'em 'bout how he is mek out from de fus' goin' off.

But Ebe ain' let him tell de story like he wants to. She gots for find out fust 'bout he wife, an' ax him right off 'bout who de gal was an' whe' she come from, an' all.

Cain wont talk 'bout dat, but he try for tell she how fine de gal kin hoe in de fiel', an' how good she mek out 'bout de house. But he Ma ax him so much o' squestion, an' break in so many times, when he tried to answer, dat dey git sort o' pervoked, all-two o' dem. An' Ebe say, "I reckin I better gone to de house an' see de gal sheself an' git a sensible answer." An' she lead off.

An' Adam say to Cain, as dey come 'long behind, "Seem like de mo' you say to you' Ma 'bout you' wife, de mo' trouble you gits in."

But Cain aint say nothin'.

Ebe bleege to notice dat de yard is nice, an' swep', an' eberyt'ing look deestent. But what kind o' 'oman kin de gal been? She mind been mek up dat de gal aint wut a drat, an' she couldn't hardly wait for mek sure.

An' when dey git close, Cain call out to he wife, "Gal, come to de do'."

An' de gal come. An' at de fus' look, de hair on Ebe's head riz right up. But den she seen de baby in de gal's arms, an' she holler out, "Adam! Look, ol' man! We gots a gran'." An' she gone right ober for tek dat chile.

"Wait, Ma! Dat's de least one," Cain say, an' call out, proud-like, "Chillen, come here!"

An' dey come roun' de corner o' de house—a gang ob 'em. De fus' one is white, an' de nex' is black, an' de nex' is white, an' de nex' after dat been black, twelve head already. Half o' dem chillen been buckra like dey Pa, an' de res', while dey ain' been hairy like dey Ma, been black as soot, an' burrhead! An' dat howcome dey been two kind o' people ebber since den.

Adam look 'pon de chillen, an' den 'pon Ebe, stannin' dere wid she mout' open, an' she eye jis' a-bulgin' out an' a-rollin' in she head.

An' all she mek out for say is, *"Do,* Jedus!"

XI

BR' RABBIT HANKER FOR A LONG TAIL

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L Ambition, LI audacity LII and labors, with fowl, LIII with fish, LIV and with flesh. LV What came of Br' Rabbit's plan of creative evolution.

L

One time when de summer time come, an' de sun-hot like to burn up eberyt'ing, de skeeter an' san'fly an' gnat use dey mout' too good, an' tease an' bodder Br' Rabbit too much. He gots to keep a-jumpin' 'cause he aint hab nothin' for bresh off dem t'ing wid, an' dat work him too hard.

So he gone to schemin' roun' for see what he kin do for be rid o' dem. He notice Br' Bull-Cow stannin' under a tree, chewin' he cud satisfy-like. An' ebery time dem bug light on him, Br' Cow h'ist he tail, an' knock 'em, an' dem gone 'way an' lef' him 'lone. Turreckly Br' Hoss come long de road, an' a fly buzz 'bout he ha'nch, an' he jus' switch he tail, an' kill 'em dead.

Br' Rabbit enby dem too much, an' he bex 'cause he-self aint had a long tail like dem. He t'ink if dem creeter had p'inted him for gib out de tail like dey oughter, he'd ha' had him a long tail too. Mek him mad to 'member 'bout how he been bleege to cry an' beg Sis' Nanny Goat to fool her into gibin' him eben dat stumpity little bit o' cotton tail he got now. Dat aint no real use in dis worl'—only to tek 'way de shame o' habin' none 'tall. Fly an' t'ing jis' laugh at it. But taint no use goin' back to dat; de squestion been how he gwine git a sizable tail right now. Long tail would suit

MBB

him nice, an' set him off gran' an' mek him a fine figger ob a feller.

He gone home an' he study, an' he study, till turreckly he hatch out a plan. Tis a right bowdacious plan too, but den Br' Rabbit is a right bowdacious creeter. Dey aint nothin' so outrageous but he will try it de one time. An' Br' Rabbit put on he sto' clo'es, wid he blue breeches, an' he yaller shoe, all so fine. An' he cock he hat an' he tek de path for gone to Hebben, for ax God if he won't be so kind as to gi' him a long tail like dem turrah creeter is got.

LI

Taint been so easy for Br' Rabbit to find de way, 'cause eberybody he ax seem to hab a different notion 'bout how to git dere. Br' Rabbit listen to all, an' pay no 'tention to mos', but study he head an' keep a-pushin'. An' bye an' bye it seem like de narrow pat' kinder onrabble an' onrabble befo' him, an' he gone on an' gone on till at las' he git heself spang to de front gate o' Hebben, an' de head o' de long Abenue. An' he push in, an' walk 'long de grand Abenue, an' at las' dere he is, right front o' de Big House.

Dat House sho' is big! Br' Rabbit hafter walk a mile or mo' roun' to de back p'razza. When he git dere, he tek off he hat, an' put it on de step. He tek he bandanna, an' dus' he yaller shoe an' rub he forehead, an' t'row it in he hat. Den he reach ober an' knock on de flo' o' de p'razza: Tap! Tap! Tap!—sort o' easy-like.

He heart mos' fail him, but nothin' happen. He wait a leetle bit. Den he rap again. Mebbe God aint in—

but no fresh track lead 'way from de house. Turreckly he rap again, li'l mo' louder.

Dis time God holler out in de house, in a great big voice, "WHO DAT?"

Br' Rabbit is scared for true. He say in a timperish kind o' whisper, "Tis me, suh."

God yeddy him, an' say, "Who 'me' is?"

"Eh—jus' me—Br' Rabbit, suh."

An' God ax, mighty sewere, "What you want, Br' Rabbit?"

"Jus' a li'l somepn, suh. Won't tek you sca'cely a minute," Br' Rabbit say kind o' nervish.

"Humph! What sort o' business you up to now?" God say. "Set down, an' I'll be out turreckly."

Br' Rabbit seddown on de step. An' after sich a lengt' o' time, while he mos' wish he aint nebber come, God come out.

De fus' look Br' Rabbit git at God he been so scared he mos' bus' an' run. But when he t'ink 'bout how bad he want dat long tail, he hol' he groun'.

He jump up off de step an' mek he manners, an' pull he forelock, an' scrape grabbel wid he foot.

"Now, Br' Rabbit," God say, sort o' short, "What dat t'ing you want so bad it mek you bold enough to come way up here like dis?"

Br' Rabbit pull he forelock again an' respon', "Mauss-suh, dis wedder so hard on we po' creeter, I don't see how we mek out. Look like Br' Mockin' Bird is de onliest one kin enjoy it, an' he hab to git way 'pon-top a saplin' outn de way 'fore he kin jump 'bout an' sing like he does. We, what stay on de groun', hab Satan own time. Ebery sort o' debblish bitin', an' stingin', an'

troublin' t'ing, we habs to conten' wid. Gnat, an' greenhead fly, an' san'fly, an' redbug, an' tick, an' chigger an' sich a t'ing, dey does bodder we from fus' day-clean to dark. Dey work from kin to can't, an' dey work *fait'ful!* An' when dark come an' dem lef' off, skeeter an' gallinipper jine han's to tek place o' dem, an' suck we blood an' sassy we till fus' day come again. Eben den, Maussuh, some creeter mek out better dan de res', 'cause dey is got a real tail, not jus' a leavin's, like Sis' Nanny Goat gib me. I notice good what a nice tail Br' Bull-Cow an' Br' Hoss done git. When fly bodder dem, all dey habs to do is wave dey tail in de air, an' de fly an' de skeeter is scairt. If dey don't fly off, Ping! Dat long tail crack down, an' dey done dead. Now, suh—" Br' Rabbit git mighty brash, an' fix he mout' for beg till tis jis' as sweet as 'lasses—"I jus' come here for ax you, *do* Maussuh! Please, suh, if you could be so kind for gi' me a long tail, so me too kin bresh 'way dem t'ing."

God cut he eye down at Br' Rabbit, an' squinch up he forehead, an' regard him good. Den he pucker up he mout' like he been bite green persimmon. An' he say, "You mek like you mek. You been contrady 'bout dat tail in de fus' place. Sis' Nanny Goat done jus' as I tol' she, an' she sho' been bery kind for gi' you any tail at all. Eben so, what wid all dat, you come here to me for gi' you tail like de bery best o' de creeter got! Hm-m! You mighty leetle for hab long tail. Br' Hoss an' Br' Bull-Cow is big, an' stan' high off de groun', but yo' belly mos' drag in de dus'. You ought to could jump 'bout in de grass, an' keep dem fly off."

"Dat's what I done, suh, but dat aint 'nough."

God look at him close. "You wants to be in de fashion, enty?"

"Who! Me, Suh? What I got to t'ink 'bout fashion, Suh? I tenksful for what I got. Only t'ing is, Suh, I seen how dem creeter kin bresh fly—dat's what fetch me here!" But Br' Rabbit so scared he couldn't keep from trimblin' a little bit.

"An' dey look good to you, Br' Rabbit, enty?" An' God kind o' smile at him.

"Yessuh! But——"

"So dat's what you come here to bodder me wid." God sort o' squinch up he face. "Well, you smart enough to git here, an' dat is mo' dan most. I reckin I'll set you a task to see jis' how smart you is. Dat'll keep you busy an' you won't be bodderin' me awhile anyhow, an' if you done it, I *might* gi' you a long tail."

Wid dat he turn roun' an' gone in de house. Turreckly he come out again wid somet'ing in he han'.

Br' Rabbit jump up from whe' he been set down, an' mek a manners again.

God gi' him a crocus bag, an' say, "Tek dis bag, an' bring it back to me full o' black-bird."

Po' Br' Rabbit cry out at dat.

But God mek a mout', an' cock he eye down at him, an' Br' Rabbit shet up.

Den God gi' him a hammers an' say, "Knock out Br' Alligator's eye-toot's wid dis hammers, an' fetch 'em to me."

Dis time Br' Rabbit too 'stressed for so much as grunt.

Las', God tek a li'l calabash an' say, "Dis-here is to fill wid Br' Deer's eye-water. You understand? Now,

you git 'way from here. An' don't you come back bodderin' me till you done all de whole lot." Den he turn roun' on he heel, an' gone back in de house, an' slam de door.

LII

Br' Rabbit been so cut-down he kin scarcely pick up he hat for put on he head, an' gone home. He heart hebby, an' he foot drag 'long de groun'. He walk 'long an' he t'ink. He shake he head, an' he t'ink. How he kin catch black-bird by de sack-full? He aint no hawk! Who wid good sense goin' to projick roun' Br' Alligator mout', knockin' out he teet' wid a hammers? Specially when you seen Trouble wid him before!

An' gittin' Br' Deer eye-waters! Br' Deer so foolish an' scary, if you was jis' to ax him 'bout any sich a t'ing, he would git scared an' run off, an' you nebber could git close to him again. Tis most onreasonable! God sho' fix it so tis mighty hard to git a long tail. He shake he head an' he walk long, an' he been so sad till at last when he git home he most dead wid disapp'int. Don't look like he can ebber do dem task dat God p'int him to do. He been up agin it, for true, for true.

But Br' Rabbit schemey! Y'know, he leetle, but he keen as a whip. An' he work he head day an' night, how to git a sack full o' black-birds. Dat t'ing bodder him too long, but at las' he figger out a plan. Fall o' de year, buckra burn off dey rice field bank, where de grass been grow all summer an' stan' hebby, an' when dat fire trabble along, an' de smoke roll 'long an' roll 'long ahead ob it, all dem bird what been libin' in de grass git foolish wid de t'ing an' fly 'bout crazy like.

So Br' Rabbit gone down on de bank an' git in a big tussick o' grass, jus' a little way in front o' where dem beginnin' for burn. An' when de fire come dat way an' de hebby smoke come down on dem, de bird fly 'long an' light, an' den fly 'long an' light some mo'. Dem light at las' jus' in front o' Br' Rabbit's tussick. He jump out, an' ketch a bird an' put him in de sack, an' jump 'bout again an' ketch some mo', till at las', spite o' how slippery dem bird is, he git he sack full, an' he bery proud.

LIII

Den he begin nex' to figger 'bout Br' Alligator' teet'. An' one fine day he git he fiddle, an' he gone down on de rice field bank by de ribber. Now Br' Rabbit been a confessed fiddler, an' when he play an' work dat fiddle roun' to all de dance an' picnic in de country, he mek people lost dey religion, an' a whole lot been turn out o' de church, from cross dey foot to he dance chunes, 'cause when Br' Rabbit play, foots don't tek notice wedder dey is crossin' or not!

Now Br' Rabbit seddown on a stump, an' start for play on he fiddle, an' sing, an' pat he foot, an' when he do dat somet'in' got to move.

An' turreckly Br' Alligator, 'way down in de bottom o' de ribber, yeddy him, an' come to de top o' de water an' poke he big eye out, an' look 'bout for see who tis.

Br' Rabbit pay him no 'tention. He sing, an' he play, an' he pat he foot.

Turreckly dat music start to pull Br' Gator—till he forgit all about he back, an' de meanness Br' Rabbit done him, an' he swim ober to de bank.

Still Br' Rabbit pay him no 'tention. He gone on singin', an' playin', an' pattin' he foot jis' like nobody aint around!

Br' Alligator crawl out on de edge o' de marsh, an' den climb spang up de bank, an' seddown by Br' Rabbit; he pop he eye up at him, an' listen.

Br' Rabbit stop at las', an' Br' Alligator praise him to de sky for he singin'. Den he ask Br' Rabbit, "Kin you 'struct me how I kin sing like dat? 'Cause it'd be mighty fine if I could play an' sing so."

Br' Rabbit t'ink leetle bit an' den he tell him, "Can't say 'bout de singin', 'cause it 'pend on how a man mout' mek, if he kin learn singin' or not."

"Look in me mout', Br' Rabbit, an' tell me if tis right."

Br' Rabbit 'ten' like he ain' care to. He tell him tis a hard matter to teach.

"Do, Br' Rabbit!"

Br' Rabbit mek out like he aint heard him, an' he scratch he head an' start hummin' at a chune.

"Br' Rabbit! Man! Do please stop dat jis' a minute. Look-see kin I learn to sing," Br' Alligator beg him.

Br' Rabbit yawn, an' stretch heself, an' look down at Br' Alligator.

"Bery well, den, but you got to mind me good, an' do jis' like I say."

"Sho'! Sho'! Br' Rabbit. Anyt'ing you say!"

"Shut yo' eye tight till you git de word for open 'em again."

Br' Alligator shut 'em.

"Open yo' mout' wide—real wide—an' hol' it dat-a-way."

Br' Alligator done jes' as he is tol'.

Br' Rabbit grab up a little light-wood knot, an' chock he jaw wide open, clean back by de corners, so he couldn't shut down. An' he say, "Bite on dat a minute an' hol' still."

Den he whip out he li'l hammers what God gi' him, an'—Crack! Crack! He knock out all-two o' Br' Alligator's eye toot's! An' den, jis' dat quick, he gone wid 'em.

Br' Alligator holler an' he yell, an' he t'rash roun' lookin' for Br' Rabbit.

But Br' Rabbit aint pay him no 'tention. He jus' trabble for home. An' ebery time he t'ink how Br' Alligator jaws might hab scrunch down on him, he had to wiggle heself to feel if he is all dere. Br' Rabbit mighty well satisfy so far.

LIV

De las' t'ing Br' Rabbit gots to do is to git dat calabash full o' Br' Deer's eye-water, an' den he will hab all he task done. But dat been de hardest, an' he kin scarcely sleep, dat t'ing bodder him so. Seem like he

can't t'ink o' nothin', in de beginnin', lessn he ax Br' Deer for help out. But taint no use goin' an' axin' him for do anyt'ing, 'cause he suttin to figger you goin' to play some kind o' trick on him, an' he would trabble so fas' nobody couldn't eben catch up to tell him different.

Sometime Br' Rabbit will mos' gib up de whole t'ing, 'cause he can't guess what for do, but den he see Br' Hoss or Br' Bull-Cow, wid dem nice long tail a-switchin' an' a-swingin', an' he t'ink how fine he goin' to look heself, walkin' de Big Road when he git heself a long tail. An' how he kin sashay long de road an' shake dat tail 'bout, an' cut de fool; an' den he tek heart o' grace, an' scratch he head, an' figger some mo'.

Man! He schemey to dat, Br' Rabbit! He study an' he study. An' finally at las', he blind-God gi' him a notion, an' he gone to find Br' Deer.

Br' Deer lib 'way down deep in de woods. Time was when he used to lib in de settlement. Him an' Br' Dog eben plant lan' togedder. But Br' Deer, or one o' he fambly, hab a rookus wid Br' Dog; an' what wid one t'ing an' anudder it git to be sich a goin's-on dat Br' Dog, an' he fambly, gone to 'stroyin' Br' Deer an' hisn, ebery time dey gits a chance. Dat's what mek Br' Deer start him a leetle place 'way off to heself. Po' Br' Deer sure git a bad heart from dat fallin' out, an' he been de scariest creeter in de woods. Br' Rabbit count on all dat, an' he gone in de deep woods till he come to de leetle clearin' whe' Br' Deer had he house. An' he find Br' Deer lyin' down in de sunhot in he yard. Br' Rabbit pass de time o' day wid him, an' dem talk 'long li'l bit 'bout crop an' wedder, an' who been turn out o' de church, or git kill to de picnic, an' sich like.

At las' Br' Rabbit say, "Br' Deer, you know I is you' friend, enty?"

"Sho! Br' Rabbit, I know dat good."

"You know I always does tek up for you, eh?"

"Yes, man!"

"Bery well, den. I gots for inform you dem been t'rowin' you' name 'bout so much, up in de settlement, till I mek up me mind I goin' to tell you 'bout it."

"How! What dem say?"

"Dey say you aint no account for jumpin' no longer —dat Sis' Nanny Goat tek de prize for jumpin' nowadays."

"Oh, do tell! Br' Rabbit—who kin say dat! Do! Why I kin jump t'ree time as high as dat no-count leetle t'ing!"

"Br' Dog say you can't, an' I reny dat. An' I come right here to gi' you de chance to show me how you kin jump. Now I seen Sis' Nanny Goat jump a bush mos' as high as dat one ober dere, an' she kin jump it good, too. Kin you jump dat high?"

Br' Deer suck he teet'. He say, "Man! When I been a leetle fellow, 'fore I kin walk good, I could jump bush like dat one."

"Man, suh! Go on! Dat bush is a sweet way up in de element for anybody to jump! But if you kin mek it, I wish I could see you hop ober, so I could pass de word 'long in de street to Br' Dog."

Br' Deer git up, an' he run down he yard, an' den he come back ober de bush, high an' fine.

Br' Rabbit look 'stonished. He whistle. He slap he ha'nch. He praise up Br' Deer for he jumpin'.

"Dat aint nothin'," say Br' Deer, an' he jump anud-

der bush a little more higher, jus' to show what he kin do.

Br' Rabbit sing he praise loud. "Br' Dog is sho' got to shut dat lyin' mout' o' hisn when I carry de tale to de settlement how fine you jump. Man! You look nice doin' dat! I reckin you could eben jump dat big bush ober yonder?"

An' Br' Deer he tek dat one good. So Br' Rabbit he show Br' Deer higher, an' mo' higher bushes, till at las' he fix on one dat aint a bush—tis more like a nyoung tree, an' it got a hebby fork. Den too, tis all tangle up wid jasmine an' cat briar, an' smilax, an' supplejack.

When he look at dat tree wid de jasmine, Br' Deer sort o' hesitate. But Br' Rabbit hearten him wid praisin' till he reared off to jump it. He leap high in de element —but he can't mek it. He lan', *slam,* in de hebby fork!

De t'ing knock de breat' out o' him. Den he twis' roun' for git out, an' he tangle up bad in dat jackwine an' briar. He holler for Br' Rabbit for come help him.

Br' Rabbit mek sure he is cotch fas', an' he say, "Man, I can't help you, you too hebby, an' you might fall on me, an' bus' me back. But I goin' right away to de settlement for git 'sistance an' git you out."

Wid dat, he tek de path, an' he gone till he git out o' sight. An' den he t'row heself on de groun', an' he roll, an' he wallow, an' he laugh, at de way he fool Br' Deer an' de way he goin' git he way him now.

Br' Rabbit laugh till he cry, an' den he git up off de groun', an' pull he han'kerchief out he pocket, an' run back to Br' Deer, jus' a-squallin' out, "Oh, Br' Deer! Come out dat bush, Br' Deer. Don't was'e a

minute! Br' Dog—" An' he mek out like he can't speak, he cry so.

" 'Smatter, Br' Rabbit?" Br' Deer so scairt he voice tremble.

"Come out right now! 'Cause Br' Dog an' he whole fam'ly been on de way here dis minute, for eat you in dat bush. When I git close to de settlement, I yeddy 'em on de path."

Br' Deer he shake, an' he kick. He pull an' he push, but all he done is tangle heself mo' tight in dat jack-wine; it hol' him so fast.

"Git out o' dat bush, Br' Deer! Git out o' dat bush, 'fore dem git here an' kill you before me yeyes." An' Br' Rabbit bow he head, an' mop he eyes wid de hankcher.

Br' Deer heself bus' out cryin' den. He struggle, an' den he cry, an' den he struggle, an' den he cry some mo'.

An' all dat time Br' Rabbit mek out like he 'sistin' him. But all he done is to tangle dem wine' roun' Br' Deer's foot good. An' he hold out dat leetle calabash what God gi' him, so it ketch ebery drop o' dat eye-water what run out o' Br' Deer's eye.

Ebery time Br' Deer look like he might let up, Br' Rabbit screech out, "Oh! Po' Br' Deer! You goin' be nyam today!" An' Br' Deer bawl out again.

But eben so de calabash aint quite full up yet, so Br' Rabbit juck at he foots an'

he call out, "I yeddy 'em mo' close, Br' Deer, jis' a-howlin' for yo' meat! Hurry, Br' Deer, or nobody can't sabe you!"

Br' Deer struggle de best he kin, but he couldn't move heself, an' he gone to cryin' again. An' turreckly wid all o' dat Br' Rabbit git dat calabash full o' eye-water. Den he tek a leetle corncob outn he pocket, an' stopper up de calabash. Den he wipe he own eye an' he aint say no mo'. He jis' walk 'way, an' lef' Br' Deer high up in de tree-fork.

Now dat Br' Rabbit is done all o' dem task what God fix for him, he ain' was'e no time. He gone home. He put on he sto' clo'es, an' pick up de t'ree t'ing dat God ask for. He tek de path to God' house, an' all de way he walk *swonger!*

When he git dere dis time he aint pay no 'tention to back 'prazzas! He walk right up to de front do'. An' he knock bold an' loud. Bam! *BAM!! BAM!!!*

God, in de house, holler out, *"WHO DAT?"*

An' Br' Rabbit answer out, "Tis me, Suh. BR' RAB-BIT!"

"What!" An' God' woice sound sort o' curious like, "You back here already, eh? You aint done all dem task I set you?"

"Yes, Suh."

"You mean to tell me you got all dem t'ing I tell you for git?"

"Yes, Suh, dey is all right here, Suh."

"Tek care wid yo' foolishness, Br' Rabbit! You aint lie to me?"

"No, Suh. I gots dem all, Suh."

God aint mek no soun' for awhile, but after sich a lengt' o' time he come out de do'.

Br' Rabbit pull he foot good to him, but he feel dat please' wid heself he jis' grinnin' all ober he face. Den he notice dat God look bex'. An' Br' Rabbit straighten up he face right now.

"You hab de blackbirds, an' Br' Alligator's eyetoot's, an' Br' Deer's eye-water, eh? Well den, lemme see 'em."

"Yes, Suh. Right now, Suh." An' Br' Rabbit gi' him de sack full o' blackbird.

God open de mout' o' de sack, an' it is full o' nothin' but de pure blackbird floppin' aroun'.

"Well, you got dem, eh! You is clebber, Br' Rabbit! Now whe' dem teet' is?"

Br' Rabbit reach down in he side pocket an' pull out a little hankcher, an' onwrap Br' Alligator' two eye-teet', an' han' 'em to God.

Dere dey is for true, an' de blood still on 'em. God put 'em in he pocket, an' he say, "You had luck, enty? But whe' is de hammers I lend you?"

Br' Rabbit aint t'ink God goin' to ax 'bout de hammers, so he aint bring it, but he talk right fas', an' say, "How, Maussuh! You aint want de hammers back! I jis' lef' it home, an' I goin' fetch it fus' t'ing in de mornin'. But now lemme show you dat calabash wid Br' Deer' eye-water." An' he hunt in he coat-tail pocket, an' pull out de calabash.

God tas'e it, an' smell it, an' den he say, "You is smart, aint you, Br' Rabbit! Bery well den!" He p'int at a loblolly pine tree out in de yard. "You go an' set yo' self underneat' dat pine tree till I kin fix you up."

An' he turn roun' an' gone in de house, an' slam de do' after him, *BAM!*

LV

Now Br' Rabbit gone ober like he was tol', an' sed-down under dat tree. But he aint like de way God slam de do', at all. An' he aint like de way God talk to him. An' he notice dat God's eye stan' red when he look at de pine tree. An' Br' Rabbit can't res' easy, 'cause he gittin' mo' an' mo' scared. He scuffle roun' on he hunkers—little bit, by little bit—till he git on de other side o' de tree trunk from de Big House, an' he sneak 'way real easy, keepin' dat tree 'twixt him an' de house, till he git 'way ober in a corner o' de yard whe' he kin hide heself under a hebby muckle-bush.

Man, *Suh!* He aint hardly git in de mucklebush 'fore BRAM! BRAM!! BRAM!!! Outn de clear sky, what aint got so much as a cloud in it, come de bigges' t'under an' lightnin' ebber was seen. Suh! It jus' *cram* down on dat loblolly whe' Br' Rabbit been! An' nex' minute, whe' dat pine tree stan', aint nothin' 'tall but a pile o' kindlin', an' dat afire!

Br' Rabbit aint study but one t'ing: Git away! He aint stop for nothin'. He tek he foot in he han', an' hit de Abenue to de Big Gate, an' trabble it jus' a-peltin'.

'Bout dat time, God in de Big House look out de window to see how dat t'under an' lightnin' he send fix dat bowdacious Br' Rabbit, so he won't be pesterin' roun' no mo'. An' he seen a little somet'ing jis' a-skee-daddlin' down de Abenue. An' he look good, an' sho' 'nough, tis Br' Rabbit. He lean out de window, an' he put he two han's to he mout', an' he holler.

"Ah-hah! Ah-hah!! AH-HAH! You so smart, eh! You so *drat* smart! Well, GIT A LONG TAIL YO' SELF!"

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